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*The Social Problems Series*

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EDITED BY

OLIPHANT SMEATON, M.A., F.S.A.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE

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## REMOTE STORAGE

"OF course, when men wanted the franchise, they did not behave in the unruly manner of our feminine friends. They were perfectly constitutional in their agitation. In Bristol, I find they only burnt the Mansion House, the Custom House, the Bishop's Palace, the Excise Office, three prisons, four tollhouses, and forty-two private dwellings and warehouses, and all in a perfectly constitutional and respectable manner. Numerous constitutional fires took place in the neighbourhoods of Bedford, Cambridge, Canterbury, and Devizes. Four men were respectably hanged at Bristol and three in Nottingham. The Bishop of Lichfield was nearly killed, and the Archbishop of Canterbury was insulted, spat upon, and with great difficulty rescued from amidst the yells and execrations of a violent and angry mob. In this and other ways the males set a splendid example of constitutional methods in agitating for the franchise. I think we are well qualified to advise the suffragettes to follow our example, to be respectable and peaceful in their methods like we were, and then they will have our sympathy and support."—T. D. BENSON (quoted from *The Reformers' Year-Book*, 1907).

## INTRODUCTION

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THE question of women's rights is in the actuality. It bids fair to be one of the most passionate questions of social reform of our day. It is not a passing craze. The character of the women who are leading the movement, the determined way in which the arguments are being fought out, the great impression produced in Parliament, and the deep and almost unexpected response which the cry of revolt has produced throughout the masses of the women of the country, all go to prove that this is a question that must be seriously faced and dealt with.

This is a new era in many respects, and the title "new woman" has not been thrown out in vain. The woman of to-day differs from the woman of past generations in the fact that she has a clearer consciousness of her own personality; she has more liberty than has ever, hitherto, been allowed to her sex; she is better educated; she is wider awake in all senses; she has broken down many barriers of custom; and as she takes stock of her position she recognises that she has gained, in all respects, by the change. How, then, can we stop her onward progress by saying: "Thus far and no farther," when the arguments by which we attempt to thwart her course are inept or illogical, especially in comparison with those she has already shattered? We have made another strange discovery with regard to women, which is, that hitherto she has been not only capable of submission, but capable also of suffering. We have found, wonderfully enough, that women, like men, have the desire to expand their realm of intelligence, to take part in the affairs of the world



which bear upon their own lives, and that, not less than with men, the restraints and force of mere tradition, prejudice, or caste, have become intolerable. Women want freer lives because they want freer development; they want more capable minds, and increased capacities for grappling with the increasing difficulties of modern civilisation.

Is all this unreasonable? Is it perversely wicked? Is it not rather in the very nature of things; and should not men be the first to hail this movement on the part of women, and to give them a helping hand to reach the positions where they may take their places as men's own companions? It will be said that women are inferior intellectually; that they are weak in body and timorous in soul; that their morality is so frail that it needs to be protected in glass cases; and those who hold this opinion of woman are always the loudest in proclaiming that her progress must be stopped, lest she imperil the delicate bloom of perfection to which she has attained.

The object of this little book is to examine these matters fairly and squarely; to meet every sincere argument reasonably; but, at the same time, to drag into the light of day all the stupidities and inconsistencies in what passes for argument with those who are opposed to any change, simply on the ground of past custom or baseless prejudice. I therefore propose to glance briefly at the history of this movement, and at the conditions which have been reached in other lands. To dwell too much on this aspect of the question would make even a little book heavy reading, but it is necessary to place the question of women's rights in its proper setting. Then I hope to enter into the very pith of the question, and I will beg of the reader to weigh these matters in a reasonable spirit, for any real advance in the position of women will redound to the immeasurable advantage of the nation itself.

ARNOLD HARRIS MATHEW.

CHELSEFIELD, KENT.



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# WOMAN SUFFRAGE



## CHAPTER I

### HISTORICAL REFERENCE—CONDITIONS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

THE agitation for women's rights is no new thing; in many respects it has the air of the recovery of privileges once enjoyed. There is an old legend that woman was not originally the female of the lord of creation as we now understand him, but that she belonged to another race, whose representatives were destroyed by the more active, more energetic, but more coarse and brutal Man, who captured the wife of the other, and only badly understood the treasure which had come into his hands. This broadly represents the great woman question.

In many ancient countries women seem to have possessed perfectly equal rights with men. In Egypt, for example, they appear to have lived on an equal footing and in perfect agreement with men; and a man was generally described as being the son, not of such and such a father, but of a certain mother.

Modern historians have picked holes in the character of the splendid Semiramis, Queen of Assyria, but, whether legendary or true, the ancient acceptance of her story proves that it was not contrary to the spirit of the



world of old that a woman should rule over the councils of men.

The Greeks excluded their women, but this fact does not tell against our argument. The most profound historians and sociologists—Buckle, for example—have seen therein the cause of their decay. The Greeks in their heyday reached the highest point of civilisation of the ancient world, and the spirit which was introduced into their works of art, their religion, their science, and their civic policy, remains to us as one of the highest examples of the triumph of the human mind; and yet that people succumbed, under the hand of the barbarian tribes of the North. The progress of their race was being continually fettered by the state of subjection in which their women were held. It is true that, while bound down with many restrictions, which tended to depress her intellectual development, the Greek woman possessed advantages denied to the wife of the average suburban Englishman, whose life may be considered, indeed, the most drab-coloured and unattractive known to the history of the world. The Greek life alleviated the severity of formal laws, by virtue of the gaiety, geniality, and admiration for beauty which formed part of the Greek character.

The joke is a famous one of Themistocles, who said that his little boy was the most powerful person in Greece. "Athens," he remarked, "rules over the rest of Greece; I rule over Athens; my wife guides me; and she, in turn, is mastered by our little boy." But the Greeks, although they did not admit it in their laws, made the discovery, in a curious way, that liberty of action and freedom of development improved women. Those of the sex who enjoyed these advantages were the *Hetairai*, of whom *Aspasia* was the most famous example. And it became a scandal in Greece that the Athenians so often deserted their own hearths to enjoy the society of these more accomplished and fascinating, though less virtuous, ladies.

The one country of ancient Greece where women enjoyed relatively greater liberty was Sparta, and the breed of the Spartan reached, in consequence, an astonishing degree of excellence.

The Romans, from whose laws almost the entire body of our modern system has developed, placed women definitely in a situation of inferiority; but there again we must not translate the mere formal laws of one country to another, and ignore all the varied influences of climate, traditions, manners, and customs. Cornelius Nepos writes: "Where is the Roman with whom the mother of the family does not occupy the seat of honour, where she holds her court?" Seneca spoke eloquently in favour of the equality of sex, especially in regard to marriage relations. Agrippina ruled Rome, and Claudius wished his sister to succeed him on the throne. In old Gaul woman was considered the associate of man, and in their commonwealth there existed a sort of collaboration, on terms of equality. At a later time Gaul, as indeed the whole of Western Europe, became imbued with the idea of the subjection of woman.

The ancient Germans in the days of their pristine vigour consulted their women before undertaking the important affairs of their community. There is a well-known passage of Tacitus to that effect.

In England it would appear that in olden times the rights of women were freely admitted, and in the feudal days these rights were certainly well established. Women who possessed lands, held them on the same terms as men, and exercised, equally with men, the right of taking part in the election of members of the House of Commons. In the year 1572 a striking instance of this right was observed. The borough of Aylesbury returned two members, but the lord on whom this right devolved, being still a minor, his mother, Dorothea Packington, nominated two members of the House of Commons, in her capacity of lady of the Manor. Even as late as 1739 the eminent jurist, Hackwell, argued the

matter by citing judicial decisions to prove that women who held the freehold of a landed property should vote for Parliament. In that year, however, the court decided against the claims of women; but it indicates to what a degree the right had been established, and how arbitrary was such a decision of the Court, when we find that the great Chartered Companies of India and of North America preserved the ancient customs long afterwards, admitting the right of women to vote in their elections. Even as late as 1867 the law was still uncertain in regard to certain of these questions. In that year it was discovered that no fewer than 230 women were inscribed on the List of the Voters of Manchester, and the matter was reargued before it was definitely decided that they should not exercise their vote.

Thus we see that the course of history indicates that the rights of women have for long periods been better established than they are now; that during times of national stress this right has been formally taken from women; and that the tendency has been, within our own epoch, to break down these arbitrary barriers, point by point, and to restore woman to her original equal footing once more.



## CHAPTER II

### HISTORY OF THE WOMEN'S MODERN MOVEMENT IN ENGLAND

WHEN the victory is won, and we begin to put up our statues to those who have helped in the good fight, we shall place on a high pedestal the counterfeit presentment of Mr. Samuel Evans, M.P. for Mid-Glamorgan. History will know; but our contemporary world may inquire, "Who is Mr. Sam. Evans? What has he done?"

They may seek in the blazoned scroll of greatness; in science, in art, in literature, in war and in polity, and not find him. And yet Mr. Evans has done much towards giving an impetus to our great movement. To make no further mystery, Mr. Sam. Evans is the man who "talked out" the bill for Women's Suffrage. This in itself is not a feat requiring great powers of mind. "By indignities we sometimes climb to dignities," and Mr. Sam. Evans having saved England in the same opportune fashion, and by much the same means, as the geese saved ancient Rome, he is certainly entitled to a niche in the temple of Fame. But the reason why we particularly record our tribute here is to express our appreciation of a profound utterance of his, one of those Prudhommesque gems of wisdom which, if not exactly the delight of Parliament, yet stamp the utterer as being at any rate a safe man. The House of Commons is suspicious of brilliancy; it reserves its high places for those who can best utter its familiar platitudes, with all its convictions born of limited intellect. You will remember that when Mr. Samuel Evans uttered his

famous speech, he said that "the time was not ripe for granting the Suffrage to women, for he did not observe any evidence of general interest on their part in such a movement." You see there was in his mind no question whatever of the right or wrong of the matter; but it does not seem to have occurred to him that the reason why women should have the vote was that they were entitled to it simply by virtue of their position in the state. Perhaps he thought any arguments founded upon reason and equity would be wasted on those few members who were still paying attention to his oratory. He was on safe ground in giving forth these old commonplaces, which it is their inclination to admire from long tradition.

His words fell on receptive minds. The women who were in earnest said: "We have been arguing and reasoning for a hundred years and we have made no progress. Mr. Sam. Evans has let the cat out of the bag. Blessed be Mr. Sam. Evans! We must keep Mr. Evans before our minds as a pattern and a model. He represents the intellect of the average man. We have an objective now; that is, to conquer the understanding of such a man as Mr. Sam. Evans. We must abandon fair words of reason, the eloquence of angel tongues; we must use means which will prove that we are in earnest, even to the meanest intellects."

Hence we have had the picturesque and brilliant displays headed by those indomitable champions of their sex, Miss Annie Kenney and Miss Christobel Pankhurst. They stormed the House, and, above all, they greatly perturbed the souls of all the disciples of Mr. Sam. Evans therein. The members of that ilk cried "scandal"; they declaimed in the usual stertorous style; they even whispered that "the cause had been thrown back twenty years." Miss Kenney, Miss Pankhurst, and other comrades were cast into prison, but, so far from intimidating them, the severity of the Government roused them to renewed energy. Women all over England saw that they meant business, that the cause was a living and a stirring one;

they rallied to their standard. Their doings since that time have been familiar to us. The newspapers which formerly ignored the movement have at length been compelled by the pressure of public opinion to devote columns to its discussion. Everyone in England is now either for or against the Suffragists. The vast majority of women are enthusiastic in their favour, and now, not even Mr. Sam. Evans can ever rise again in the House of Commons to talk out a Bill on the ground that he had "not seen any evidence of interest in the question."

Of course there were doughty champions of women's rights long before Miss Kenney and Miss Pankhurst were born! The history of the movement has been written up in various pamphlets which should be in the hands of all. There are two or three names here to whom it is a delight to refer; Mary Astell, for example, was one of the great pioneers of the moment, and her *Serious Proposals to Ladies* is overflowing with wit and wisdom. She says: "'Tis true, through want of learning, and of that superior genius which men, as men, lay claim to, I am ignorant of the inferiority of our sex, which our masters lay down as a self-evident and fundamental truth. I see nothing in the reason of things to make this either a principle or a conclusion, but very much to the contrary, it being sedition, at least, if not treason, to assert it in this reign."

Another still later and better known is the famous Mary Wollstonecraft. Her *Vindication of the Rights of Women* affords admirable reading, even for our own day, and makes us see how little the cause has advanced, by those quieter methods which our legislators are eternally recommending, less, perhaps, for the benefit of women than for the sake of their own peace of mind. The next great name is that of John Stuart Mill, who, on this subject as on so many others, stood out as a statesman whose boldness and sincerity rose to the heights of his splendid genius. His famous book, *The Subjection of Women*, made a great stir in its time. He brought the

question of Women's Rights within the range of practical politics ; but the movement of Mill was defeated, because of the prejudices of the era in which it was launched, and to some extent, no doubt, because the education of women was not so general as it has since become. His book is a rich mine of facts, and a perpetual stimulus to thought, which should be read in its entirety ; but possibly we may be pardoned if we quote the following passage : "To so ridiculous an extent are the notions formed of the nature of women, mere empirical generalisations, framed without philosophy or analysis, upon the first instances which present themselves, that the popular idea of it is different in different countries, according as the opinions and social circumstances of the country have given to the women living in it any speciality of development or non-development. An Oriental thinks that women are, by nature, peculiarly voluptuous ; see the violent abuse of them on this ground in Hindoo writings. An Englishman usually thinks they are by nature cold. The sayings of women's fickleness are mostly of French origin ; from the famous distich of Francis the First, upward and downward. In England it is a common remark how much more constant women are than men. Inconstancy has been longer reckoned discreditable to a woman in England than in France ; and English women are, besides, in their inmost nature, much more subdued to opinion. It may be remarked, by the way, that Englishmen are in peculiarly unfavourable circumstances for attempting to judge what is or is not natural, not merely to women, but to men, or to human beings altogether, at least if they have only English experience to go upon : because there is no place where human nature shows so little of its original lineaments. Both in a good and a bad sense, the English are farther from a state of nature than other modern people. They are, more than any other people, a product of civilisation and discipline. England is the country in which social discipline has most succeeded, not so much in conquering as in suppressing



whatever is liable to conflict with it. The English, more than any other people, not only act but feel according to rule. In other countries the taught opinion, or the requirement of society, may be the stronger power, but the promptings of the individual nature are always visible under it, and often resisting it: rule may be stronger than nature, but nature is still there. In England, rule has to a great degree substituted itself for nature. The greater part of life is carried on, not by following inclination under the control of rule. Now, this has its good side, doubtless, though it has also a wretchedly bad one; but it must render an Englishman peculiarly ill-qualified to pass a judgment on the original tendencies of human nature from his own experience."

This passage in the intervening time since it was written has lost none of its savour, and is still very salutary reading. Following John Stuart Mill, we find no less a statesman than Benjamin Disraeli advocating Women's Rights in a letter to a friend. In April 1873 he wrote: "I was much honoured by receiving from your hands the Memorial signed by eleven thousand women of England, among them some illustrious names, thanking me for my services in attempting to abolish the anomaly that the Parliamentary Franchise attached to a household or property qualification, when possessed by a woman, should not be exercised, though in all matters of local government, when similarly qualified, she exercises this right. As I believe this anomaly to be injurious to the best interests of the country, I trust to see it removed by the wisdom of Parliament."

This expression of opinion may be recommended to those ladies of the Primrose League who have joined the new Anti-Women's Suffrage party, for the idea seems to be abroad, in some quarters, that there is a "lack of tone" involved in women insisting upon obtaining their natural rights as civilised human beings.

Of late years the movement has been steadily growing. Petitions after petitions, signed by thousands of women,



have been presented to Parliament, and many societies have been formed throughout the country. Several members of Parliament have made themselves conspicuous in advocating the cause of women, notably Mr. Keir Hardie, Sir Charles M'Laren, Mr. Shackleton, and Mr. Dickinson; while two ex-members, Sir J. Bamford Black and Mr. Walter M'Laren, deserve special honour.

The experiment of "Votes for Women" has already been found successful both in New Zealand and in Australia. These countries have often been the grounds for experiment, the results of which have been later adopted in England. That this experiment has been a fairly convincing one is shown by the fact that the suffrage was not granted in all the States of the Commonwealth at one time. For example, it was granted in South Australia in 1894. In 1900, after having had opportunities of observing the effect of this measure in the sister state, Western Australia decided to follow suit. Three years later Tasmania, "the nursery of beautiful women," came into line in the same gallant style. In 1905 the women of Queensland were placed on a footing of equality with men. The movement likewise runs through Europe, from side to side, and in 1906 Finland—Finland that rests under the shadow of Muscovite rule—Finland actually decided to grant free citizenship to women. Norway has recently done the same thing.

The movement is organised; it is becoming consolidated, efficient, and very powerful. Amongst the multitude of helpers we may be permitted to mention expressly such influential bodies as the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, which is the parent of all, and of which the President is Lady Frances Balfour; the Women's Social and Political Union, of which Mrs. Pankhurst and her daughters, Mrs. Despard, Miss Kenney, Miss Billington, and Mrs. Pethwick Lawrence, among others, are the leading spirits; the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage, of whom the able secretaries are

Miss Eva Gore-Booth and Miss Roper; and The Women's Franchise Declaration Committee, established by Miss Clementina Black.

All these movements have been conducted on "constitutional" principles, except that of the Social and Political Union. We may safely leave it to the judgment of our readers to estimate how far the daring but self-sacrificing efforts of these ladies have "kept back the cause for twenty years," or to consider whether they have given it a reality, a vim, an impetus, and a hopefulness unknown before in the course of its history.

## CHAPTER III

### MODERN WOMEN—PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY, AND MORALLY CONSIDERED

LIKE most men, I have at times wished that it had been my lot to have lived at some other period of this world's history; yet, with the reflection that one would have missed the splendid spectacle of modern womanhood emerging slowly but surely from the dulling effects of centuries of artificial restraint, and false ideals laid down by men, one feels that this age, too, is one of noble endeavour, and that it will stand out prominently in the history of the higher civilisation.

Let us first consider how the modern woman has advanced physically, and how she has improved on the type of women who represented the ideal of some generations ago. With some great exceptions the woman men most admired then was the small, wasp-waisted, narrow-shouldered type, with her vacant, soulless, simpering face, who claimed delicacy as a cardinal womanly virtue, who assumed terror at a mouse, who had palpitations on hearing stories of the mildest adventure, who swooned at the sight of blood, who was subject to the "vapours" on the slightest provocation, whose thoughts never wandered beyond the details of her housekeeping or the petty social round, who never went on foot if a carriage were available, whose only exercise was occasional dancing, and that without the vigour of the modern dance, but the slow and stately quadrille or minuet. As the result of this inactivity a woman on attaining the age of thirty was not only considered

to have passed her prime, but she felt aged, and looked it, tending to become either an unwieldy and fleshy mass, or a shrunken and shrivelled shrew; and was, so far as men were concerned, a mere object of ridicule and contempt. Curiously enough, some few of these sensitive creatures indulged in the pleasures of the chase, and saw with equanimity the cruel and bloody death of their prey.

What was the mental aspect of such a type of woman? She had no field for exercising or cultivating any talent she might possess, except the social one. The result was that the mind, like the body, became enfeebled. Those who had superior qualities of mind had to suppress them sternly, in their endeavour to conform to this male standard of womanly perfection. Such women chafed under these unnatural restrictions, and this secret chafing produced either irritable and disagreeable characters, or what were still worse, perhaps, consummate hypocrites. Woman's virtues were then, for the most part, of the negative order: she was protected from temptation, but where this was not so, as in the case of actresses and women of the labouring classes, immorality was only too general. Even women of rank often lived in more or less open shame as the mistresses of royalty. They acquired a love of slander and scandal; and gratified their feelings of jealousy and envy of those whom they considered to be more fortunate than themselves, by all sorts of petty spite. Their one occupation, housekeeping, was, on the whole, creditably performed, and in those days included wider interests than to-day, since trade did not then, as it does now, monopolise so many of their duties.

None of the public schools or universities were open to them. Their education usually consisted of a smattering of French, Italian, history, and geography, and such accomplishments as feeble painting and music, to correspond. So slight a knowledge of these accomplishments was required, that they never became an interest, or



developed a love of art. Needlework, in which woman was allowed to be proficient, attained a high degree of perfection, no doubt, but the close application to such tasks was ruinous to the sight of many. She found her chief enjoyments in gossip, and in the ridiculous, unhealthy, and cumbersome clothing of the time. As a rule she brought up her children to the best of her knowledge,—restraint and punishment figuring largely in her treatment of them, especially in the case of the girls, who were entirely set aside in the interests of their brothers,—a mode of training disastrous to both. It speaks well for the natural superiority of woman that, in such cramped circumstances, she did not find a solace in the alcohol which was so freely indulged in by the men of the period, who, however, had every outlet for their activities.

From this woman, placed in so disadvantageous a position, let us see what has evolved, in the face of every possible opposition, not only on the part of man, but also from members of her own sex, who are still content to stagnate amidst cramping conditions. We have the modern woman. Physically, we see a race of young goddesses! Since the days of the ancient Briton, when Boadicea led her hosts to battle, there have been no such examples of splendid women as we see to-day, particularly amongst the younger generation, *i.e.* those who have enjoyed the advantages of the improved scholastic conditions during one or two decades. They are tall, firm, well-developed, yet graceful, with a free and open carriage, very different from the mincing, so-called “swan-like” gait of their less fortunate ancestresses; excellent gymnasts, able to walk, cycle, row, swim, skate, and play a good game of tennis, hockey, or cricket, it would be a big mouse, indeed, that would strike terror into young women such as these. As for swooning at the sight of blood, the modern woman is only too ready to offer first aid; and, not content with tales of travel and adventure, she has gone forth to seek

them for herself. Girls dance as gracefully and joyously to-day as, or perhaps even more so than, the girls of former generations. It is a rare treat to visit some of the larger gymnasiums established for the physical training of young women. There is no weariness, and no trace of *ennui* there. The very spirit of light and motion seems to radiate from the atmosphere, as the lithe and vigorous girls go through their graceful, strengthening, and, in some cases, "lengthening" exercises. This is surely better for the future of our race than injuring the eyesight over fine sewing or cultivating the charming accomplishments of the *ménage* or "musical glasses." The mothers of these girls, though frequently of smaller development, have also benefited by the more limited advantages of their day, so that we no longer see old women at thirty or forty. In fact, women of those years are often the most attractive to the fastidious taste of the man of to-day. Through physical exercise and a knowledge of hygiene, woman keeps her body healthy and beautiful. She has long disproved her alleged mental inferiority, and has eagerly taken advantage of those paths of learning which have been opened to her. Her cultivated mind, and knowledge of the world, make her companionship a thing to be sought after by man, not merely as a relaxation for his weary moments, but as a help and stimulus to his work. What a contrast is she to the poor faded creature of the past, with her limited outlook on life and its meanings. Unfortunately, there are still some women left who answer to the old type, and whom most men neglect, and whom even their more enlightened sisters cannot help finding a weariness, with their eternal harpings on the petty details of domestic life, and their ill-natured gossip about their neighbours' affairs. However, these are not modern women; they are a remnant of the "good old times," who with increasing facilities for education and culture will gradually disappear from our midst.

Since the universities and colleges have been open to

women, they have shown themselves equal to the male standard of learning, and, in many cases, have actually topped the lists of successful candidates. There are over seven hundred women's names on the Medical Register; but, I am asked, what have any of these women done to advance medical science? To which inquiry I may reply by the question, How many men, out of the same number, have done anything, materially, to advance medical science, although they have vastly superior opportunities of gaining experience and pursuing original research? The women have done good, solid work, both in surgery and medicine;<sup>1</sup> and, to their direct influence, as well as through their writings in the feminine press, we owe, in great part, the vastly improved physique of the modern girl, who not infrequently has the advantage over her brother, both in size and in strength. It is also greatly owing to the efforts of the women doctors that the evils of tight-lacing and unsuitable clothing for children have been checked in a great measure. Women have taken the highest degrees in Science and Arts. So far, they have been forbidden to practise law in this country. The Denominations, although chiefly supported by the women, also decline to admit them to their ministry, and yet the Nonconformist pulpit would seem to be a profession peculiarly suited to Protestant ladies. Those who have graduated in Science and Art, as a rule adopt teaching as their profession; and they have raised the standard of those schools in which they work to a degree of excellence unknown in girls' schools when they themselves struggled for a liberal education.

We find women taking a good position in literature and journalism. From our English literature we could ill spare the work of such women as Isabella Bird, Sarah Grand, George Eliot, Flora Annie Steel, the sisters Brontë, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Olive Schreiner, Alice Meynell, Mrs. Gaskell, Beatrice Hall (Tallentyre), Lady Burton, Mrs. Boole, Frederica MacDonald, Miss Katharine

<sup>1</sup> Vide *The Women's Year-Book*.



Tynan, G. Hill, Lady Gilbert, and a host of other charming writers. Although the realms of science and research have been so recently opened to women, we have already had work of the highest value from Miss Ormerod, Sonia Kovalevski, Mrs. Somerville, Mrs. Ayrton, Lady Huggins, Miss A. M. Clarke, and Madame Curie, who has made one of the most valuable discoveries of the day in radium.

In art, in contrast to the weak attempts at water-colour painting of the past generation, we find good, strong, earnest, original work, of ever-increasing value, done by hundreds of women artists, alike in landscape, portraiture, and animal painting. Women, moreover, have shown themselves particularly adapted for the exquisite art of miniature painting, as well as for high-class photography. In certain branches of sculpture, enamelling, designing, and ornamental metal work, woman has made her mark, and has raised these occupations to a fine art.

In music, as executants we have Madame Carreno, Fanny Davies, Lady Hallé, and Marie Hall, not to mention the genius displayed by our greatest operatic singers. As a teacher, perhaps Madame Marchesi has excelled all her contemporaries in the art of producing such exquisite perfection in the human voice. Although women have not done much as yet as composers, they are beginning to turn their attention in that direction, as witness the pronounced success of Madame Holmes' opera *L'Irlande*, produced at the Paris Opera House before the most critical audience of the day. In the programmes of most of our large London concerts the songs of women composers take a prominent place.

In addition to these occupations, we find women engaged in farming, gardening, chemistry, and architectural work. In the commercial world they are being forced to take part in almost all its branches, except where the remuneration is considerable enough to induce men to shut them out. They act as shopkeepers, stock-



brokers, managers and assistants in shops, clerks, typists, dressmakers, bookbinders, factory and laundry hands, as well as in many other trades. In these employments they are increasingly demanded, which alone speaks for the value of their work. The subject of their "munificent remuneration," which in some cases amounts to five farthings an hour, will be considered in another chapter.

Also, many thousands of women are employed by Government as Post Office clerks, teachers, lecturers, school and sanitary inspectors, nurses, wardresses, etc.

As Poor Law Guardians, woman's work has been invaluable. Indeed, her occasional unpopularity in this sphere is owing to the fact that she does her work so thoroughly and conscientiously, ignoring no detail, however small. As one of the officials in a certain infirmary, whose carelessness and neglect had been exposed by a woman guardian, was heard to remark, "She pokes her nose into everything; we've had no peace since she was elected." In this case, after the male guardians had passed through the apparently neat and cleanly wards, and were congratulating the matron on the spick and span appearance of the place, the woman guardian turned down the clothes of one of these "neat" beds, and revealed a state of things better left to the imagination!

We see, then, that the modern woman has become an important factor in our national life, and yet the domestic woman is as much with us to-day as she has ever been. In fact many women are engaged successfully in carrying on both occupations; the domestic non-paid one, and that of a wage-earner. The homes of our workmen are as well cared for as they have ever been, and this holds true, also, with the upper and middle classes, especially when we compare the artistic open-air houses of to-day with the stuffy and hideous abodes of a few generations back. Even the women of the upper classes pride themselves on an intelligent knowledge of the domestic arts, a knowledge which their immediate ancestresses would have scorned as "ungenteel."

In the matter of dress, what a vast improvement on the crinoline age are the neat tailor-made costumes, and how much more modest is the modern dress of woman, with its free and flowing grace and its dainty adjuncts, and this in spite of the attempts of the man dressmaker, who periodically announces the return of the crinoline, and the fact that small waists are to be "the coming fashion."

With regard to the character of the woman of to-day, there is a marked freedom from silly affectation, an absence of hypocrisy and spite, and of that petty jealousy which used to be considered her attributes. Owing to the broader lines of her upbringing, she has developed more self-respect and self-reliance, which form the basis of a strong and noble mind. Although not protected, as in the early Victorian days, the modern woman's standard of morality has been raised in every class of life except among the most degraded individuals. It is no longer a reproach to be called an actress. Women have now quite as strong a sense of honour as, or perhaps a stronger sense of it than, that of man. I do not see that her womanly charm or modesty has been lessened either by contact with the world or by a liberal education. I do not say that the modern woman has attained perfection, but I do maintain that if one or two generations have made such advances, the future is full of the brightest and rarest promise for the human race.

## CHAPTER IV

### MODERN MEN—SHALL WE SHARE OUR PEDESTAL?

“MY opinion is that we ought to have the Turkish system over here, and keep our women-folk locked up in harems, where they would be out of mischief,” said the Millionaire.

“Yes,” agreed the Peer, “and they ought to be drowned off, as they are in the Bosphorus, when they become *passée*!”

These remarks, which were made openly at a certain club, were greeted with loud applause by the other men in the room, and the coarse tone of the conversation that followed, with its clumsy jokes concerning the sex, eliciting hilarious laughter, made me begin to realise the position of our women. The law places them utterly in the power of these men, educated at our public schools and universities, our “men of culture and refinement!” It seemed to me something was wrong, very wrong indeed, for I have a great respect for the women of my own house, and therefore for all other women. What had woman done to produce such witty sallies among men?

“Oh, this d——d suffrage business, you know.”

I went to the next Suffrage Meeting I heard of, and there listened to two good speeches from women, one an elderly and venerable lady, the other young and decidedly pretty; quiet, modest speeches they were, full of sound sense and argument deduced from facts, replied to by men who, unable to refute the facts, never referred to the previous speeches, but took refuge in hollow prophecies of what might happen if women obtained the vote. A lawyer who was there had the honesty to say to the women: “You have all the arguments and all the right

on your side, but we have the practical power, and we will not give it to you." A nice, reassuring remark from man the ruler to woman the ruled!

As a lady remarked: "It is at least honest and consistent, and supplies a further reason for arguing that the suffrage should be granted to us." This man's remark, which I quote, is typical of the mental attitude of many "educated" men. One can only characterise them by what seems a contradiction in terms. They know a thing to be just and reasonable, yet they will not grant it. The brute instinct is still strong. So strong, that when she makes her weakness her strength, the brute devours her there and then, or drives her into a compound, safely walled round, for future consumption. The brute, strange to say, looks upon himself as "a noble fellow, but straight." "Not afraid to hit out from the shoulder;" "Won't stand any d—d nonsense;" "Not afraid to tell woman what I think," are frequent phrases in his mouth.

The ordinary male, whom centuries of false teaching concerning himself have evolved, is in some respects a curious product. He has been told that he alone has a right to all the privileges under heaven, because he is the superior being; he is stronger, both mentally and physically; he is not emotional; he is braver; he has a superior sense of honour; he is chivalrous (oh, Peer and Millionaire); he is broad-minded and generous; he has more self-restraint, more sense of humour and of fair play; he is, in fact, lord of creation! And why? Because he is a man he maintains that he possesses all these advantages to a greater degree than woman, and is determined to part with none of the outward insignia of this superiority. He will not share his pedestal. He has an enormously inflated idea of his own importance, especially in the eyes of woman. He is convinced that she is dazzled by his assertive superiority; it tickles his vanity to read that—

"God, she is a milk-white lamb, bleating for man's protection."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Keats.



Where, we may venture to inquire, lies the superiority of the ordinary city-and-suburban type of man? He is very tenacious of his pedestal. Let us look at him. He is either physically fat, flabby, well-nourished, and comfortable-looking, or he is gaunt, stooping, and attenuated, with string-like muscles. Beyond his business, and the amount of his rates and taxes, he has no interests. His politics are what his father's were, and are summed up in a few platitudes. The younger men are for the most part undersized, but full of their own importance. They look on at games, and criticise with great authority. One sees occasionally a really fine specimen of physique among them. Some of the youngsters, it is true, go in for training and volunteering, and are pretty fit as regards muscle, but brilliant specimens they are not. I have observed at most of the big city stations in the morning and evening, when the city man doth most abound, that the young women on the platform often overtop the men, and are usually better developed. These men are, it is true, good fellows for the most part, well-meaning, and always ready to put their hands in their pockets, but of the superiority they claim there is no evidence. They cannot get on without women, because they have received no domestic training, and do not like the work. The women cannot do without the men, because they have received no business training, and are rarely able to get it, though many of them would prefer it to domestic work, and are really better fitted for it. I do not decry these useful members of society; I only ask why they persistently refuse to share their pedestal with their equals? Their remarks on the subject of women which one can hear in a crowded railway carriage, are truly edifying. One stout man laughed till I feared apoplexy, and repeated: "Fetch out a mouse, is what I say. Fetch out a mouse. Ha, ha, ha!"

Another pale-moustached individual, when he had recovered from the mouse joke, gained the confidence and applause of the entire carriage-load by exclaiming:

“Women are not fit for politics, they are happier at home.” And with this profound remark the subject was dismissed as proved. This is a specimen of another variety of the consideration and the chivalry meted out to a large number of women, who are more conversant with politics and literature than their men, as they have often more time to read and reflect on them when rocking cradle and darning socks. Man sometimes has the sense to see this, and to adopt his wife’s view, but he takes the credit to himself, and would not, for worlds, admit that his wife had influenced him. Sometimes he does not even realise her influence, being naturally so cock-sure of himself. This indirect influence of woman, which is so highly recommended, is essentially bad in its effects upon the character of the men over whom it is exerted; it increases their unreasoning vanity; it has made many of them the self-inflated windbags they have become. A prick of the needle and, unless the “influence” is there to quickly patch the hole, they collapse.

Men encourage this, to the detriment of their own development and that of the women, who are told to use this “influence,” instead of freely indicating their opinions, and possibly suggesting to the men to hold their tongues when they have nothing to say.

Modern men’s conversation concerning what is called “the womanly woman” is not quite what this womanly woman imagines when she is not at hand. I often wonder what an altered tone her “bleatings” would assume if she were invisibly present on these occasions. Here, it is not the men who are to blame so much, as those misguided women, who insist that they only want to love and to be loved and admired by men. That is the highest aim of their existence. How can a sensible man love and admire anyone who pipes so feeble a note? Is it any wonder that men stick to their pedestal, and regard these adorers with sublime condescension, and even stoop to pat them on the head? But their pat is not unmixed with a touch of amusement at the head. They do not

take the hand to help the pretty one up, in spite of all her grace, her charm, and her fancied cleverness. It is agreeable to have someone to look down upon, hence the pat. These women are responsible, too, for that execrable product of their system, the modern puppy. He reclines upon his pedestal with a cigarette in his mouth. Not all the charms and grace of young and splendid womanhood can tempt this blasé boy to exert himself. He will not go to a dance unless the hostess has the reputation of being "a jolly good caterer"; he will go to a dinner, but shirk the rest of the entertainment. He ungraciously accepts anything good that women offer in the way of hospitality—"They do worry a fellow so." If the woman has daughters, he openly asserts that she and they admire and have designs upon him. He is found in considerable numbers in all grades of society. He can hardly stoop to speak to a woman or a girl unless she be a celebrity, generally of the least elevating or desirable type.

I once asked a charming and clever young girl friend of mine, who had recently made her *début* in society, how she was enjoying her first season. She raised a pair of puzzled eyes, and said: "I am rather disappointed; I thought it would have been lovely to go to dances and all sorts of delightful places, but it is only dull. The men, whether they dance or not, won't or can't speak a word. I try every subject under the sun, from the weather upwards, but they don't even listen, much less reply, except in monosyllables; they all look martyred—except when 'supper' is mentioned! Girls are far nicer and pleasanter. I wish dances were for girls only. The young men are horribly conceited, or stupid, or both. I don't know what the reason of it is," sighed Dorothy; "why can't they be civil and friendly, like the girls?"

So much for our unsophisticated Dorothy.

Let us take the printed opinion of a lady, who must know modern man thoroughly, to judge by the volumes she has poured forth concerning him for nearly a quarter of a century: "He looks upon the Apple of Life as his



property, and if he gives Woman a small, bad quarter of it (often made bitter by a bruise or a worm), she is to think herself highly flattered and favoured; He has always been a law unto himself. And he makes laws for Her, which she has to accept. Whatever she does—save and only the bearing of children—is distinctly wrong. Whenever she elects to be something more than a gentle cow with its calves, she is ‘unsexed.’ When she is not the gentle cow,—when she declines altogether to belong to the bovine species,—she must be a cook, or a charwoman, or anything, in fact, that runs in the domestic line, such as a mender of glorious Man’s socks and a washer of his soiled linen. For, says he grandiloquently, she has no ‘brain’ for any higher development. This has been his constant verdict through the revolving cycles of time, and any attempt at casting off her chains, or a rise to personal individuality by Woman, he has resented with almost childish cruelty.” These are the words of a woman who is no suffragist. In one of her novels—for it is Miss Marie Corelli herself—she represents Satan as a most fascinating, modern man, and leaves that gentleman hovering round the entry to St. Stephen’s! I have never heard a suffragist go quite so far as this!

Another and really contemptible modern type is the rather slow yet vain man, who is inwardly mortified, conscious that he has no claim to pose as superior, in any respect, to women. He is generally surrounded by clever women; he secretly feels that he is not their equal in brain power, therefore he crows loudly about his “superior faculties” and struts upon his pedestal. We hear a good deal about henpecking, but the cock (especially the bantam variety) can do his share of nagging adequately. It is then called “dignified remonstrance.”

In a more familiar way it is pleasant to turn to that modern man who has grasped the essence of chivalry. He cares nothing for the ancient claims of sex superiority. His care is for the true progress and welfare of the race.



He comes forward in the cause of women, in the face of opposition and ridicule. He not only challenges the opponents of women's progress, but extends to her a helping hand to aid her in her struggle for justice. He does this, too, in spite of the piteous "bleats" of her more reluctant and fearful sisters, who cannot realise, notwithstanding soothing assurances to the contrary, that they need never leave their homes, no, not even once in seven years, if their more enterprising sisters obtain their desire.

There are numbers of men who realise that the woman's cause is man's cause also, and who wish to see women enfranchised, yet, either through indolence or fear of ridicule, they do not come forward to aid them in the combat for justice. All the more honour, then, to Walter M'Laren, Bamford Slack, Keir Hardie, Philip Snowdon, Dickinson, Pethwick Lawrence, Israel Zangwill, William Bull, and others of that patriotic band who, remembering how women in the past have always helped men in their struggle for political freedom, come forward boldly and generously, now that women are trying to work out their own political salvation. There are men whose ideal is the

"Perfect woman, nobly planned,  
To warn, to comfort, and command,"

rather than

"The milk-white lamb bleating for man's protection."

Men, strong in themselves, and feeling their own strength, have no fear of being overridden or overruled or outvoted by women, even when they have the vote. They are not cowards. They know that beyond these petty considerations and futile arguments lies the future will-force of the nation. And they know that woman must be educated, both physically and mentally, to bear the increasing charges laid upon her by the progress of civilisation and enlightenment.

One would imagine, to hear the talk of "woman's

incapacity for politics," that man had a natural inborn genius for mastering the intricacies of public questions. Hardly a city clerk, or an agricultural labourer in all England, escaped being asked to record his opinion of Tariff Reform, though perhaps scarcely five men in the House of Commons itself were really competent to deal with so complex a problem, whether *pro* or *contra* the measure!

The wisdom of the others might have been summed up in the words of the scrubby-bearded man whom I heard in Fleet Street declare: "Now this 'ere fiscal (sic) question, it don't take more'n two seconds' hard thinkin' to see as Joe must be right. Yuss, that's right. It's got to come!"

It would be an amusing experience, and it would afford much ammunition for the campaign, if a clever lady could make a round of popular public-houses, say in Hoxton, when some great political question is being discussed, and decided (!) by the opinions of those who meet there. I do not wish to insinuate that the working man is, especially, an offender; let the same lady take a peep into a "swagger" club, where a few insipid lordlings are discussing similar matters, and she will be equally edified if not amused.

Then, again, if we turn to the better kind of men, those who are trying to do something in the world, in literature, or in the domain of thought and politics, we find that the modern man, equally with the modern woman, finds his life becoming more and more complex; his horizon is extending; his duties are more manifold. He, at least, should sympathise with the ardent desire of woman to rise above her artificial grooves, and to fit herself by her intellectual toil to gaze upon "the heights the soul is competent to gain."

Intellectual women have been the veritable help-meets of great men; witness the case of Berthelot, the famous French chemist, whose wife had encouraged all his efforts, whose death was followed immediately by his own, and whose remains, by virtue of a noble decision of the French Government, will rest with his own in the Pantheon.

## CHAPTER V

### WOMEN'S WORK AND WAGES—DISADVANTAGES UNDER WHICH WOMEN WORK

WE tell woman, very often, that her sphere is the home, that so long as she remains within that special sphere, and does her duty in it, we will love, honour, and cherish her; but that we cannot respect her, or take her seriously, if she ventures to outstep or move beyond the narrow scope of her utility.

With the exception of her modern educated sister, the average woman accepts this definition as the correct one. Let us consider, then, how we honour, cherish, and reward these duties and those upon whom they devolve.

To begin with—the great number of women of the working classes who remain in their homes, and toil hard for their husbands and children—often by night as well as by day—receive, as the reward for their labour, nothing but the satisfaction of doing it; and, as their work has always to be repeated, this blessing may not always seem adequate. The saying that “virtue is its own reward” must have been invented by man for the benefit of woman. Even if it does not wholly please her, it saves him from further inconvenience.

As a rule, when a working man works steadily, and gives his wife enough out of his earnings to keep things going, and does not use physical violence towards her, she is quite content, for she has food, clothing, and shelter. Her work is very hard; her methods of getting through it, let us grant, are not always the best. She toils during longer hours than the husband, yet if he or

her children are asked, "What does your mother do?" in nine cases out of ten they will reply, "She doesn't do anything; she stays at home and minds the house." This is the value placed on woman's work, the honour and respect paid to it. All the hours of hard, disagreeable toil are taken as a matter of course, even by herself. The idea of actually giving her anything in the shape of money, as a wage, would be impossible, and absurd in many cases, since every penny the man earns is needed for the household expenses and the "stocking." The woman of this class does not ask it. She only wishes for sufficient, out of her husband's earnings, for the necessaries of life for the family; yet, even to this, she is not *legally* entitled. There is no law to compel a man to give a just proportion of his earnings to his wife. What she is to receive, depends solely and entirely upon his good, or bad, will. Indeed, among the working classes, the man who does his duty towards his wife, receives a great deal of *kudos*, especially from his employers. He is regarded as a fine specimen of the British Working Man, because he shares his wage justly with the woman who toils for him. There are "bad husbands" who reward their women folk with rough language and with kicks and blows, in which case they can truly invoke the power of the law. There are bad wives as well as bad husbands, but be their work well or ill done, their reward depends upon the man. It is true that if a man refuse to contribute to the support of his wife and family, she can "have the law on him," but even after that her prospects are not brilliant. I have seen him leaving the Court, shaking his fist at her, and announcing his intention, with all his graphic force of expression, of taking possession of certain of her digestive organs, on his release from durance vile!

The reward of a woman of what we call the better classes, who remains in her sphere, is, in many cases, none too enviable, unless she be a very worm, or pretend to be one. Her work is often more harassing, though not so



physically arduous, as that of the woman of the working classes. The married woman of the middle class to-day is too often in the position of a middleman between an exacting husband on the one hand, and her equally exacting domestics on the other—the man, economical or downright parsimonious and stingy; the domestic, delighting in waste and in the joys of good living, after a meagre upbringing. The wife is responsible for the faults of both. I wonder, between ourselves, why women of this condition ever marry.

Unless a woman of the middle classes has enough money of her own, or has a settlement made upon her, she is even more dependent upon what her husband is disposed to consider sufficient for household needs, than is her poorer sister. It is not seldom the case that a man continues to allow his wife the same amount for housekeeping and dress, an allowance which includes much more than mere dress, when his income is £1000 or £1500 a year, as he did when it was only £500 or £700, and this in spite of the increasing expenses of a growing family and increased social demands. Indeed, within the last few years, when a discussion took place in one of the daily papers as to whether wives needed holidays, many of the husbands inclined to the view that the wives did not require a change of air or scene. This was only necessary for the men. Such is the value placed on the tedious, responsible labours of the woman who remains in her sphere. This affords an insight as to the “cherishing” she may sometimes receive! Then, after leading a woman a life of disguised penury, a man can legally will away every farthing of his money, or leave her with a mere pittance. Should he die intestate and his estate be valued at over £500, his widow is only entitled to that sum and a certain percentage of the remainder, the Crown and his children getting the rest. If a woman die intestate, all that she possesses goes to her husband, irrespective of any children she may have had by a former marriage.

Such are the legal rewards and the security of the position of the woman, who, relying on our promises, chooses the homely sphere. We men do not always realise how serious a risk is incurred by giving our daughters and sisters in marriage, without arranging these matters on a just basis beforehand. The law, however, should determine the minimum of a housekeeping woman's share in the husband's earnings. This would no doubt be a difficult matter, but it would at least show that some value is placed upon her work. We must disabuse ourselves of the idea that marriage is always a means of support to the woman. We can only say that in certain classes it is so, *provided the man so wills it*, not otherwise.

There are over a million and a quarter more women than men in the British Isles, so that marriage, with its risks as a permanent provision, cannot provide for all of the sex, be they never so willing to adopt it as a career. They must live, and in order to live they must work. Let us see what they receive for this work.

The only professions in which men and women are upon an equality without prejudice, are the stage and literature. The latter includes the higher branches of journalism. By this work women can hope not only to make ends meet, but to overlap, if they have the ability and the opportunity. This is probably the reason why these two professions are so overcrowded.

Women as doctors in private practice, with the exception of the brilliant few, though they charge the same fees as men, do not earn much more than the necessaries of life, owing to the strong prejudice still existing among the old-fashioned of their own sex, though this is rapidly dying out in face of the good work done by these ladies. There are a few appointments open to them, such as junior posts in hospitals, assistancies in infirmaries and asylums; but these lead to nothing, since they are not allowed to take the higher appointments, which are reserved for men only, according to our present custom.

Proof that they—who are, after all, the best judges—have found this sphere of work congenial, useful, satisfying, and successful, is found in the fact that medical women give their own daughters a similar profession.

Let us see the standard the Government sets in its valuation of women's work. It pays its inspectors of factories and schools as follows :

## FACTORY.

MEN.		WOMEN.
Chief Inspector . . .	£1200	Principal Lady Inspector £400-500
Sub-Chief Inspector . .	800-900	Senior " " 300-400
Superintending Inspector	600-750	Inspectors . . . 200-300
H.M. Inspectors . . .	300-555	None.
Junior Inspectors . . .	200-300	

There are about nine hundred men inspectors and ten women inspectors.

## SCHOOL (ELEMENTARY).

MEN.		WOMEN.
Chief Inspectors . . .	£1000	Chief Inspector . . . £400-500
Divisional " . . .	900	Inspectors . . . 200-400
Inspectors . . .	400-800	None.
Sub-Inspectors . . .	320-520	None.
Junior Inspectors . . .	200-400	None.

There are hundreds of men inspectors, but only sixteen women.

## SCHOOL (SECONDARY).

MEN.		WOMEN.
Chief Inspector . . .	£1200	
Staff Inspectors . . .	800-900	
Inspectors . . .	400-800	Inspectors . . . £300

Two ladies only are generously offered these last-named posts, and I notice they are written down as "temporary." Surely in a matter touching the welfare of school children, of whom four million are girls and infants, women ought to be consulted equally with men. The same would seem to apply to the inspection of factories where women's labour is employed.

The nursing profession gives employment to a consider-

able number of women. This is essentially womanly work, and many who enter it do so not as a means of livelihood, but from a noble desire to alleviate the pain and suffering of others. Their work requires a very hard, and not inexpensive training, lasting three years. The life is one from which most men would shrink. Their working years, too, are limited, as they cannot enter in most of the recognised training hospitals under twenty-five years of age. Few people care for an elderly nurse. The work is very wearing, and exposes them to many risks, with the result that they age rapidly. The highest fees for those fully qualified by this course do not exceed three guinea a week, with board and lodging, while the majority only receive less than one guinea; and continuous employment is not certain. If, therefore, a nurse is to provide for her declining years, she must save every penny, and not much is left for enjoyment while she has any capacity for it. Male nurses, who are never so efficiently trained, usually picking up their knowledge in asylums and naval and military hospitals, with no definite time training, and no fees to pay, receive three guineas per week, as a matter of course; the fee being generally much increased in mental cases.

There are thousands of women engaged in educational work. Teaching, which used to be the only profession for better-class women, was for years the refuge of those gentlewomen whose relations were unable to provide for them at home. What kind of refuge it was, has been described by the Brontë sisters, who wrote from experience, and by many other writers of their day and ours. The lot of a governess was much less enviable than that of a kitchen-maid, and in many cases this still holds good to-day, where women go out as resident governesses in private families. Their salaries, to judge from the tempting offers one sees in the press, may be anything from "a comfortable home offered in return" for teaching various accomplishments, including music, modern and ancient languages; to "help in the housework" is not infrequently demanded in addition, probably to add to the comfort of



the desirable home. When money is offered it is anything from £10 upwards. For a thoroughly-trained governess, who often has a university degree, £100 to £120 is sometimes offered by the wealthy. £100 clear seems a good profit, to the superficial observer, but in houses where this salary is given a very great deal is expected. The governess must dress well. She has to pay for her own holidays, perhaps also for her laundry, and if her methods are to be kept up-to-date she frequently has to pay for lessons for herself. Therefore, out of this dazzling sum, there is not much left to lay by for old age or for a rainy day. Yet how elated those women are who succeed in obtaining such a position! These posts are the plums of the teaching profession. Men employed as tutors are rarely offered anything under £100 a year, and, in their case, tutorship is only a temporary employment, and, generally speaking, a stepping-stone to something else. What man of equal education and position would like to look forward to nothing more than £100 a year for all his working days? And the working days of a governess last only while she has some semblance of youth. In the high schools, the rate of payment is more satisfactory; but, in comparison with that received by men in public schools, it still leaves much to be desired.

The Board School teachers, as a rule, are comparatively well paid; but here again the male teachers receive all along from one-third to one-half more than the female for exactly the same work, or rather more on the woman's part, as she is expected to teach sewing in addition. The girl pupil teacher starts with 2s. 6d. per week but the boy with 4s.; at the next step the girl receives 4s., whilst the boy has 7s. 6d.; and so on up the scale, until the woman gets an average of £98, 7s. 10d. as head mistress, and the man £148, 11s. 5d. as head teacher. Why should a mere accident of birth, over which neither had any control, be the cause of punishment for the one and reward for the other? Next, we will compare the rates at which women

clerks in the Post Office, who are doing *the same work as men*, are paid :

	MEN.	WOMEN.
Second Division—Lower Grade . . . . .	£70-250	£65-80
„ „ Higher Grade . . . . .	£250-350	£85-110

IN DISTRICT OFFICES AND IN THE PROVINCES

First-Class Sorting Clerks . . . . .	40-56s. per week	18-40s.
Second „ „ . . . . .	28-35s. „ „	15-28s.

In the case of trained secretaries, who are sent out by a certain institution, the women are supposed to receive £120 per annum, while the men have £360. The women, again, do the same work, receive the same training, and pay the same fees as the men! In one case, where the male secretary of an M.P. was found incapable, and had made “a confusion worse confounded” at £300 per annum, he was, after some years, politely requested to leave, and his place was taken by a capable woman, who, in time, produced order out of chaos, and maintained it, but at £100 a year! And why? Because sex represents the value of the work!

The ordinary girl clerk and typist is paid one-third or one-half the salary given to a male doing work of the same kind and value. The typist might claim a little more, as she is not always spoken of as a woman, but as a “typewriter.”

This proportion of payment also holds good in the case of employees in the large business emporiums and shops. Girls have been known to don male attire, and, their sex being thus disguised, they have received the same pay as men. Only a few weeks ago a case of this kind was discovered, where a clever little girl of thirteen, in order to help to support her family, put on a boy's clothes and received a boy's wages, while giving every satisfaction to her employer.

Strange to say, domestic service, which presents the greatest advantages to women of the working classes, is

the most shunned and neglected by them. I do not refer to the lodging-house "slavey," but to service with respectable people of the middle and upper classes, where the girls live in surroundings much more comfortable and healthy than those to which they have been accustomed in their own homes. They are not, as a rule, overworked. It is true their work begins early, and ends late in some cases, but there are hours between when they are free. They have no expenses, except clothing, and these are partly given to them in most houses. They have a yearly holiday of ten days or a fortnight, with full pay; and weekly evenings and afternoons are now a matter of course. Their wages are from £16 up to £50 or £60, or even more, for a first-class cook. As a rule, if a girl does her work well, she may look upon her place as a permanency, and not infrequently her old age is provided for. One of the chief reasons which prevent working girls from taking to service, is that it is unduly represented as a hard, laborious life, and the neat becoming uniform of a domestic is looked upon as a badge of servitude. Girls are, as a rule, untrained when entering service, and in many cases resent settled hours which apply only to themselves, and not to a crowd of others as in the factories. The economical ways of the better classes are set down as meanness by these girls, who are usually entirely ignorant of the value of money; and where one maid only is kept, there is naturally a feeling of loneliness which a girl coming from home for the first time dreads. However, girls are again beginning to realise the advantages of this occupation, in which, as a rule, they are unrivalled by men in this country, and where they can make a comfortable living and, if thrifty, put by a certain sum for their old age. It also serves as the best training for making them competent housewives, should they eventually marry.

It is estimated that there are several million women employed in factory work. The cotton trade is said to be the best paid. In this the average wage is 14s. per



week. Men are willing to leave this trade to women, as they do not think it sufficiently remunerative for themselves, except in the one branch, "mule spinning," where the wage is £2 per week, which the men consider rather a good thing. This magnificent average of 14s. per week is due to the Cotton Unions, in which there are 96,000 women as against 69,000 men. This is what the much-vaunted unions do in the case of women. That unions, without political representation, do but little, is shown also in the case of the Teachers' Union, in which there are 29,000 women, yet their wage for the same work is about half what the men receive. The wages of women in the potteries, according to the statistics given by Miss Gore-Booth, are from 8s. to 12s. per week. This lady goes on to say: "The women who work in the warehouses get 9s. for work which, when done by men, is paid at the rate of 25s. to 30s. per week. Numbers of women employed in the endless smaller and less skilled trades, such as machining, folding, sewing, and cigar, cap, fancy box-making, chain-making, etc. etc., can never hope to bring home more than 7s. to 12s. a week, all their lives." In *Women's Work and Wages* the authors tells us that where women replacing men do the same work, or where the work has been originally assigned to them, the wages are always one-half to one-third of what the men receive. One instance of this must be quoted: "In one section of a large cycle works the men employed in 1902 numbered 80; in 1905 the men employed numbered 20, women having displaced the rest." Now comes the significant point: "The wages of the men were from 30s. to 40s. per week. The highest wages of the women, on identically the same machines and doing the same work, is 18s., the average wage being lower. When the men were dismissed they were told to go home and send their wives in their places, and the men actually obeyed like slaves."

One of the Lancashire lasses brought to London by Miss Kenney to storm the House, stated that she had



earned 3s. a week for the last fifteen years, working 55 hours a week. She also said it would be of no use to speak of the atmosphere in which she and her companions worked, for it would not be believed. And this in spite of our factory inspection.

These trades would seem to show clearly the frightful disadvantages under which women workers exist; but in the sweated industries we find an even worse state of things. We find women making match-boxes for two-pence per gross; if the work is continued from early morn till late at night the woman may hope to make a shilling a day. Unfortunate creatures sew boot and shoe tops for tenpence a dozen. One of our great social workers gives the following description of one of these women: "She is a skilled and practised hand; she sews the uppers to the soles, and puts in the socks. It is very hard work. The soles are not made of leather, but of composite. Sometimes the stuff is very poor, and breaks away from the stitches; but any work that is not perfect is returned on her hands. She has to find her own needles (which cost a penny each, and often break), as well as her thread and paste, and to take her work to and from the shop, and wait, for hours often, before she gets the new supply."

Women employed in making shawl fringes can earn the handsome sum of a  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. an hour, and have the satisfaction of knowing that the work cannot be had constantly. For making infants' bonnets, working thirteen hours a day, 7s. a week is gained, and for beading shoes, working fourteen hours a day, 6s. is the wage earned per week. Further statistics are given in the *Handbook of the "Daily News" Sweated Exhibition, 1906.*

We could go on enumerating industry after industry in which these injustices exist, but will only mention the fact that one generous company has, within the last two years, declared the rate per hour of their women employees to be five farthings! Yet we live in the

twentieth century, and make a boast of our free and happy England! The work of woman is not paid according to its worth, but according to the sex of the worker.<sup>1</sup>

Woman might well adapt the words of Shylock in her helpless, hopeless, downtrodden condition: "I am a woman! Hath not a woman eyes? hath not a woman hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a man is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?" (*Merchant of Venice*, Act III. Scene 1.)

She does not do this; all she asks is to be allowed a voice in the making of the laws which control her labour.

<sup>1</sup> To indicate our impartiality in this matter we will quote a paragraph from a newspaper not particularly favourable to women's cause, *The Evening News* of London.

## "OUSTING THE MALES

### "WOMEN ARE BEING ENGAGED IN INCREASING NUMBERS

"The plan of dispensing with male clerks and replacing them with cheap female labour is being extensively carried on in London, and Mr. Herbert H. Elvin, the general secretary of the National Union of Clerks, seen to-day by a representative of the *Evening News*, explained what was happening. 'The plan,' he said, 'is being largely followed by large corporations who wish to cut down expenses, and by small traders who find it increasingly difficult to make a living. The correspondence clerk is not much affected, but he will be in the near future, for girls are beginning to study foreign languages, which will fit them for more responsible positions. Those who are feeling the pinch now are the shorthand typewriting clerk and the book-keeper. The former class receive on an average from 35s. to 45s. a week, but a girl can be engaged for £1 to £1, 10s., or just about two-thirds of the cost of a male clerk. The number of male clerks who have been ousted by girls must be very large, for every advertisement brings three to four hundred applications.'"

## CHAPTER VI

### OUR PRESENT BENEVOLENT LEGISLATION CONCERNING WOMEN—THEIR BASE INGRATITUDE

“DEAR LADIES, why not let us men legislate for you? Why not remain at home in your own sphere, devoting your time to our comforts, and to beautifying yourselves? Why unsex yourselves, and destroy our ideals by demanding a ‘say’ in what concerns you? Leave it all to us; do not mix in public affairs, and we will ensure your interests, we will respect you, we will love you, and we will even fill your cup of bliss by marrying you,” says the man.

The woman replies: “It is very good of you, dear Sir, and very kind to make us these promises; we are a whole million in excess of the male population, and who is to support us? What is your beneficent legislature doing for us in that way? We want the means to earn an honest livelihood. Though our sex is considerably in the majority, yet many of the professions and trades refuse to admit us. You use your power for your own private ends.”

Impatiently we call down from our pedestal: “We only want to protect you, to keep you healthy and pure, modest and sweet. As for our selfish ends, just glance, with us, at some instances of recent legislative suggestions, and even you, all unreasoning as you are, cannot deny the generosity of our intentions, and your ultimate gain by a one-sided legislation. Just reflect, now, on the genial kindness of that able statesman, Mr. John Burns. So anxious is he for your well-being, and that of your offspring, that he wishes to make it illegal for married women to work in factories for two months before, and

five months after, a confinement. Now, is not that a law made solely and generously in your interests? We men cannot benefit by that. Mr. Gladstone, ever chivalrous to your sex, comes forward too, and, in order to protect your lives, wishes to legislate against your taking part in any dangerous performance, for which you are paid, such as we see in the case of circus riders, acrobats, gymnasts, high divers, bicyclists, aeronauts, parachutists, and so on. This law, too, would be confined solely to the interests of your sex, for Mr. Gladstone does not propose to protect his own, although accidents are more common among male than among female performers of this kind. And it is not only your persons we wish to protect from danger. We wish to keep your minds and morals pure and unspotted, by legally preventing your coming in contact with anything or anybody rough, coarse, immoral, or unwomanly. We cannot bear to know that 27,000 of you are serving as barmaids. None of us who respect our mothers would care to see them serving behind a bar. The thought is revolting to our filial minds. And this chivalrous feeling towards you is not confined to our legislators. It is spread through all grades of society. Why, even those rough, uneducated, but real good fellows belonging to the Miners' Federation share the feeling. Even they are not without a care for your health and for your moral welfare. The miner hates to see you employed in numbers at the pit-brow, doing hard work in the open air, and exposed to the horrors of his deteriorating and lewd conversation and society during the daytime. Are you not touched by that? The good fellow wants even to protect you against himself.

“Against yourselves, too, we protect you by our legislation. We do not allow you to work in mines underground; we limit your hours of toil; we do not allow you to work at night when you are engaged in the same industries as ourselves.

“Our benevolent Government gives you employment in the Post Office, and in its schools and hospitals and prisons,



and some other professions are open to you also. All this, though you have not a single vote amongst you. Dear sisters, you must acknowledge, in the face of these facts, that we are not the selfish, self-seeking monsters against whom you shriek so hysterically. You cannot deny that these wholesome and beneficent laws have been made, or suggested, by us, for your sole welfare. If the franchise were limited to your own sex, would you deliberately set yourselves to legislate for us in this way? We think not, we think not! We fear, on the contrary, that you would consider your own advantage in everything. Look at the hours we have devoted to the deceased wife's sister alone!"

We rested on our pedestal after this statement of unanswerable facts. We felt satisfied, benign, absolved. We felt that we might pose as the head of a group representing "Benevolence," and that even the greedy, unreasonable woman must acknowledge it. But, what was that? Did our pedestal rock slightly? Ah! doubtless woman already confesses our superiority, and with true womanly enthusiasm she is about to inscribe the name beneath our group. She is composing a panegyric. Listen!

"Yes," she begins, "you spend many hours of the nation's time in 'talking out' what you are too cowardly to fight out; unable to argue, you reply to our straightforward request by antiquated and feeble jests.

"The Right Honourable John Burns is going to protect the married woman from the evil results of factory work for several months, even though she may feel quite equal to it. What, then, does the Right Honourable John Burns propose to do to provide the necessaries of life for a labouring woman and her child before and after the child's birth? Married women do not, as a rule, work in factories, unless it is absolutely necessary. If the woman's husband is able and willing to support her and his children, she will not be found doing such work. The husband is, therefore, unable, or possibly unwilling, to give her sufficient money out of his earnings to provide the

necessaries of life for himself and his family. If the woman is prevented from working, who is then to provide for them? Supposing she remains at home, the work there is often more onerous than at the factory. Cooking, scrubbing, washing, moving heavy articles of furniture, all form part of the daily toil of a woman of the humbler classes at home. She does not sit before the fire engaged in needlework and moral reflections, as the Right Honourable John Burns may imagine. The factory is, in most cases, cleaner, wholesomer, and better ventilated than the home of the factory worker. If the married woman is liable to be absent from the factory for months together, the employer will naturally cease to employ married women. For the woman's part, she will endeavour to employ means, always injurious, to avoid the responsibilities of maternity when it leads to deprivation of her livelihood. This benevolent Act will also be a direct encouragement to immoral relations, since unmarried women are apparently not included in it. A Bill which will limit, or prevent, the employment of more than 100,000 women, will naturally increase the demand for male labour, while adding this enormous number to the already hopelessly overcrowded multitude of unskilled workers." A very useful Bill to us men!

Then, as a lady has recently written, "Mr. Herbert Gladstone's well-known gallantry and care in the preservation of our persons from dangers, even those of a remunerative nature, is touching and consistent. Circus horses might, indeed, injure us when we are not under the control of a constable; and the air, during a balloon ascent, might be more injurious than that of Holloway cells, with their indescribable arrangements, the details of which cannot even be mentioned here. With a legislator such as Mr. Gladstone, we ought, indeed, to feel secure. His Bill, if successful, will add some 10,000 more to the unskilled woman workers' army; and again provide increased employment for men. The closing of the profession of barmaid to woman, by the fond care of a

paternal government for our morals, will have a precisely similar effect." Two very useful Bills for us men.

"We come to the miner. He feels deeply concerned, honest fellow that he is, that his wife and daughters and other female relatives should have to associate with himself during the hours of work, when the tone of his conversation is not of that elevating purity which, we must hope, characterises it later in the day. He wishes that his women folk should only meet him when he is free from inspection and restraint, and purified by his day's association with his like. His moral tone, when unrestrained in the bosom of his family, would doubtless produce a race of female saints, and tend to the edification of any of the superior sex. May we make a suggestion here? Why should not legislator and miner combine, and, after certain misguided women come out of jail, organise some miners' 'Happy Evenings' for their regeneration, and thus lead them away from debasing efforts to take part in the legislature? They would thus speedily recognise their inferiority.

"Let us return to our miner's request, and consider its effect, if granted. The result of protecting the women's morals would be to leave the pit-brow, with its earnings, in the possession of this same honest miner, and again to add numbers to the unskilled women workers." Another very useful Bill to men!

No doubt, in some way which we cannot yet grasp, it is either in the interests of our women's persons or of their morals, that they are debarred from apprenticeship to certain trades, where increased skill would lead to increased wages; and from practising certain professions, for which they hold all the necessary credentials.

Yes, our generous Postmaster-General does employ them as clerks, and allows them to do the same work as the male employee. He does not prevent their services from being equally valuable. He even gives them £65 to £80 per annum where the man gets £70 to £250; he gives them £85 to £110 where the man gets £250 to £350.



The case is similar with regard to women teachers, who do exactly the same work as men. Yet we do not find that a landlord is compelled to reduce his rent because a tenant is a woman, or that the baker takes a farthing off the price of his loaf for that reason. Women's rates and taxes are not reduced by half, in the same generous and just spirit which prompts men to reduce their salaries. Doubtless, from the most righteous and chivalrous motives, we endeavour to legally protect them from employments which are capable of enabling them to gain even a scanty livelihood, especially, as we have said, when such employment would fall into our own hands. We leave for them, it is true, one means of livelihood, in our desire to protect their morals. There is one way in which a woman can always earn money. We must not name it here, but our benevolent legislation, every time that it adds to the ranks of the unskilled women workers, sends more and more of them down to the depths, through hopeless struggles, more or less prolonged.

One member of our "Mother of Parliaments" raised shrieks of merriment quite recently, in that assembly, by his exquisite humour, in arguing against a Bill for female suffrage. He said he had been obliged, on a previous occasion, to sit on some of his fellow-members' knees, and how awkward it would have been for him had he been obliged to sit on women's knees under the same circumstances! The wit and cogency of this brilliant argument we do not question. The remark, however, seemed incongruous, since we have all placed our foot upon woman's neck, without any hesitation or sense of awkwardness. We may shudder at the idea of a woman behind a bar in a public-house, at the pit-brow, or at St. Stephen's, but do we not regard her with equanimity plying her one trade in Piccadilly and Regent Street?

Women have inscribed a name upon our pedestal as the group appears to them. It is not "Benevolence," it is "Hypocrisy."



## CHAPTER VII

### WILL THE SUFFRAGE HELP ?

WHAT do women suffragists expect as the result of their enfranchisement? I have been urged to emphasise the fact that they expect no *Golden Age*. Some few speakers on their behalf, generally those of the opposite sex, have been carried away by the exaltation of the moment when pleading the cause, and have made prophecies in much the same fashion that the ordinary candidate for Parliamentary honours makes to his constituents as a matter of course. So far as that the women have not gone. The speeches and writings of the leaders of the movement certainly contain no such irrational expectation. Touching this subject, I may quote from the address of a lady who was speaking from the working-woman's standpoint. After giving statistics of the disgraceful disparity of women's wages compared with those of men, and women's inability, at present, to alter these conditions, she remarked: "We do not regard the granting of the franchise as a sovereign remedy for these ills. We look on that merely as a lever, to help us, slowly, to alter them for the better, so that, in time, women as well as men can get just pay for a day's work, or at least get a living wage; and anything that helps us in any degree, however small, to do that, is not only desirable but imperative."

Thus working women expect gradually to improve their conditions of work and wages by the exercise of the vote, as working men have done since their enfranchisement. From that time we find a gradual but

marked improvement in the conditions of men's labour. Their wages have risen from 50 to 100 per cent. in nearly all trades, while the hours of work have been considerably reduced, and vast improvements have been introduced in workshops, mines, and factories. Here is one instance. In the year 1831, in a certain colliery in the Lothians, men were receiving 11s. a week; in 1872 they had 23s. 4d. per week; while in 1892 they were paid 33s. 3d. per week. To-day their wage is 40s. a week.

Before they were enfranchised they had no means of resisting the abuses and demands of capital. The trades unions had much to do with this improvement; but trades unions for women, who have no political power at their back, have but little weight, as I have pointed out in the chapter on Women's Work and Wages. Mr. Sidney Webb, in his book, *Labour in the Longest Reign*, says: "It is difficult to believe that the shilling a day wages of unskilled women in the East End of London" (it must be remembered that the sweated and home workers make nothing like this), "the six to seven shillings a week earned by the Belfast rope-maker or tobacco worker, or even the ten to twelve shillings earned at piece-work by the skilled linen weaver or the Glasgow cotton-mill operative, represents any appreciable advance on the scale of the past generations. Women's wages for unskilled labour still gravitate, as a rule, pretty close to the subsistence level, below which they can never have sunk for any length of time."

Women desire to raise the standard of their wages to an equality with that of men for like work. This the women of New Zealand have achieved since they were enfranchised. Yet another example of what can be done in this direction is found in the State of Wyoming, where the women are allowed the privilege of the franchise; there, the female teachers now receive the same payment as the men, where formerly they only received half their salaries. Women also hope to see a minimum wage

established for those occupations in which women only are engaged. In Sydney, New South Wales, which is another State in which women enjoy the right to vote, they have already obtained a minimum wage of £1 per week for seamstresses, although the cost of living in Sydney is much less than it is in England. Compare this with the 6s. 8d. per week of the dressing-gown maker, the 7s. per week of the boy's knicker-maker, and the 5s. per week of the tailoress, working sixteen hours a day, in the East End of London!

The present restricted range of women's labour is another injustice which they hope to see removed in time. Instead of limiting those to which they are at present admitted, as is the tendency of modern legislation, the right will be demanded to learn any trade for which they show themselves fitted, and not, as at present, to have the apprenticeships in skilled trades closed to them. And, of course, they desire to be allowed to practise any trade or profession for which they are qualified, and for which they possess the necessary credentials.

No matter what the character of their work may be, they expect by legislation to have it judged by its true market value, and not by the sex of the operative.

The suffragists' object in getting a living wage is not only to benefit the women workers materially, but to render them less liable to the awful temptations which assail the underpaid and next-door-to-starving girls and women. In this way they believe the moral and physical tone of the nation at large will be improved, and only the really vicious among women would ply that horrible trade which degrades a woman beyond redemption, while her accomplices, as a rule, escape scot free, or with a little humorous "chaff." *Apropos* of this, I cannot resist quoting a short but pregnant paragraph from *Women's Work and Wages*, which should, if realised, disarm the opposition both of the most "womanly" Dowager-Countess, and that of our most popular novelist. It

seems to me the most melancholy and the most pathetic statement of the case which could possibly be made. The words are those of a Birmingham workshop girl: "One evening a strange lady failed to understand what one of these girls said, who apologised, saying, 'We are rather rough, Miss, and don't rightly know how to speak to a lady.'

"'Never mind,' was her answer, 'we can all get on together so long as we keep ourselves respectable.'

"'Well, Miss, we all mean to keep ourselves respectable, but when work is short the master puts us on piece-work, instead of day-work, and we don't know that we won't come out short at the end of the week. These things make a girl lose heart, and then she does not care what becomes of her. You should see some of the girls crying on pay day.'"

Why do these girls cry? They must add to their earnings to live, and there is only the one means of doing so for such as they.

Surely such words ought to awake an interest and stimulate a desire to try, at least, what women could do for their sex to better these conditions of life. Private charity and charitable organisations are useless here; some more potent measures are needed, and we can only hope to stir up our legislators to more active measures by giving the women the vote.

There are various other matters which closely affect women, such as the housing of the poor, laws of sanitation, public lodging-houses, prison reform, and closer inspection of lunatic asylums, all of which ought to come somewhat within their jurisdiction. There are certain existing laws which they would wish altered, more especially the divorce laws, which as they stand are a crying injustice to women. The suffragists hope that, in some degree, their voice in the legislature may be of use in solving the problem of relief of the poor and needy, more especially in the case of unemployed and unemployable women. The distress in our large cities is ever on the



increase, and in many cases is due to the antiquated and indiscriminate methods of relief adopted by charitable people, some of whom object to the suffrage because they think they would be unable to continue their mistaken, though well-meaning, system of pauperising the poor!

To remove the stigma now placed upon all women by including them in such categories as lunatics, criminals, paupers, aliens, and minors, and in this way to raise the whole status of woman, is one of the chief aims of the suffragists. This is a stigma which every self-respecting and thoughtful woman must resent, and so must any man who is forced to swear before the altar that he will "honour" his wife. It places her in a lower and more hopeless position than the male lunatic, for he may recover; than the male criminal, for he may reform; than the male pauper, for he may acquire property; than the male alien, for he may become naturalised; than the male minor, for he may become adult. The woman remains a woman, and therefore she can have no hope. Olive Schreiner somewhat exaggerated when she so eloquently and pathetically wrote: "We were equals once when we lay new-born babes on our nurse's knees. We shall be equals again when they tie up our jaws for the last sleep."

No! They are not equal at birth. Before that event, if it happens to be the case of an heir to a kingdom or to an estate, preparations are made on a great scale to welcome the boy babe, which are ingloriously cut down should a mere girl be born. At Potsdam recently, when the guns began to thunder forth to announce the birth of a grandchild to the Kaiser, the waiting throng listened in silence until the twenty-fifth report announced the arrival of a boy, when cheers and *hochs* arose, caps were thrown in the air, and much beer was consumed in token of the universal relief and joy that a girl had not been born into the world.

Could anything be more pathetic than the reception given to the younger daughters of the Czar, or to those of the King of Italy, in contradistinction to the shout of

jubilation that went up all over the world on the births of the Czarewitch, and the heirs to the Italian and the Spanish thrones. Even in the humblest homes only too often do we hear that the "little stranger" is "only a girl!" She is branded from her birth as an inferior and an incapable being. By removing this stigma she will gain in self-respect, in self-reliance, and in self-support; and doubtless we shall find many other desirable qualities develop as time goes on. John Stuart Mill's statement, made in 1869, when women's opportunities were still restricted, has been amply justified by the splendid use they have made of the chances since extended to them. He says: "They have always, hitherto, been kept, so far as regards spontaneous development, in so unnatural a state, that their nature cannot but have been greatly distorted and disguised: no one can safely pronounce that if women's nature were left to choose its direction as freely as men's, and if no artificial bent were attempted to be given to it, except that required by the conditions of human society, and given to both sexes alike, there would be any material difference, or perhaps any difference at all, in the character and capacities which would unfold themselves." This pronouncement affords a definite warrant for granting further liberty to the women, and at the same time for holding out a rich hope for the ultimate good of any state which benefits by the influence and intellect of the whole, instead of those of half, of its people; and if, as some opponents seem to fear, at a future period women should prove themselves more able and more highly gifted than even the present gifted lords of creation, will not the whole race benefit?

Granting the franchise to women will also remove that anomaly of taxation without representation, which we declare, in the case of men, to be tyranny, and it will increase the honesty of our claim to be *a free nation*.

It is very probable that the present deplorable increase of intemperance, of infant mortality, of the hideous filthiness of slum life, of inferior and unsuitable education,

would not have come about had the value of women's opinion and advice in these matters been acknowledged and acted upon. Everyone testifies to the excellence of the work done by women on public bodies. We are glad to see that owing to the mere demand for the franchise it has been proposed to restore women to those offices from which they have been so shortsightedly displaced. While women are politically ostracised, and are not considered as *persons* in the eye of the law, they can only regard their tenure of any such office as dependent on the caprice of those who may be in power, *not* on the expressed wish of the people. Take the case of the late Margaret Lady Sandhurst, who, in 1888, was returned for the London County Council at the head of the poll. Because she was a woman, one of the defeated candidates, Mr. Beresford Hope, petitioned against her return, and both the Court of Queen's Bench and the Court of Appeal—the supreme court of “justice” in our country—decided against her, *because she was a woman*; and not only was she turned out, her place being taken by the said Mr. Beresford Hope, but Lady Sandhurst was fined £5 for every vote she had given on the Council, and this after she had been elected by the people! It is impossible to calculate the loss that the public interests have suffered by the exclusion of women from such bodies as control public affairs; and were the suffrage granted, women would be reinstated on these bodies. Instead of such flagrant anomalies as fifteen women School-Inspectors to two hundred and thirty men Inspectors, we might hope to find the number more equalised, considering how much more fitted women are than men to understand the needs of little children.

For years past some ladies have been agitating to have the girls in the Council schools taught subjects of more practical use in fitting them for their natural duties in life as good housekeepers and intelligent mothers. These ladies have laid particular stress on teaching girls the care of infants, and for seven years have been working



to achieve that end. They have been met on all sides with opposition from the men in authority, who would seem to have thought there was a want of modesty in such a departure, with the result that, so far, it has been decided in only two schools, and that only within the last year, to provide this instruction. Had these ladies had any practical power, this most necessary instruction would have been provided in all the schools some years ago. What a saving of the infant life of our country might thus have been effected!

It is not only to elevate the position of all women, and to aid the wage-earners and the poor, that the suffragists desire a practical share in the legislation of the country. By introducing a new and practical interest into the narrow lives of that large section of women whose ideas, at present, do not extend beyond their attire, their household, and their domestic or love affairs, or those of their immediate acquaintance, they hope, gradually, to do away with the pettiness, the narrowness, and the blind obstinacy which generations of such limited interests have engendered. By false education they have been made so much the slaves of custom that they now turn to rend those more clear-sighted women who are willing to suffer ridicule and opprobrium in order to help their sisters out of the slough of mental indolence and selfishness into which they are surely sinking, and which, to them, represents woman's universe, beyond which she must not even glance!

Another grievance of the same type of woman may also be indirectly remedied by the widening of their sphere in this manner. They frequently grieve at the absence of their male relatives and friends from their homes and from their social functions, and when success crowns their efforts to catch these flies in their "webs of rose and gold, spangled with diamond dew," we fear that, in spite of the "silken strand as fine as a hair" with which they hold him, the poor fly, though perhaps outwardly obsequious, cannot suppress the inward con-



tempt and boredom he experiences both as to his captivity and as to his captor. When, in addition to their womanly graces, there is added the interest of subjects of discussion of a practical nature, to draw the sexes together, it may be expected that the "strand as fine as a hair" may develop into an honest and endurable cable, and there will be no longer need for any of the artful dodges of the spider. Here they judge by the example of New Zealand, where family life has become more united, and altogether brighter, since woman has taken her proper place in civic matters.

The women of narrow interests, being like the rest of their sex, by nature essentially practical, have not taken a lively concern in politics, because they have no practical voice in the matter. At election times, when they realised that they could be of real use, they came forward and worked with the best. With the exception of the "Smart Set," to whom Fr. Bernard Vaughan has drawn attention of late, women are by nature economical and careful of obtaining full value for their expenditure, weighing all the *pros* and *cons* before deciding on a purchase; so, when they are entitled to a vote, they will regard it from a practical point of view, and in this case also endeavour to obtain the best, and only the best value, by means of that vote.

One notable and most desirable effect of this demand for the elevation of women, which is already perceptible, is the drawing together of women of all classes of society and politics in one common bond. There is a setting aside of all snobbery and class feeling in the mutual respect and sympathy of woman for woman. In the suffragist procession of March last were to be seen walking together the peeress and the laundry girl, the university woman and the factory hand, the mistress and the maid. There was nothing of condescension or servility on either side. And this harmonious and enviable condition has always been characteristic of the whole movement, thus thoroughly disproving the statement

that women have no *esprit de corps*; in this it is a case of levelling up, not of levelling down.

Following the example of women in those States where the suffrage has been granted to them, the suffragists hope to introduce a higher and purer tone into politics, and also to choose as their representatives in Parliament men whose character will bear close inspection. Women have a great sense of responsibility in serious things as well as an eye for detail, and what is generally referred to as their "marvellous intuitive instinct," when carefully analysed, consists, after all, of nothing more occult than an extra share of common-sense, which ought ultimately to do away with a considerable quantity of the red tape which is such a barrier to needful reforms in so many departments in our midst.

If the government by men only had been a perfect success, instead of the hopeless muddle it has too often proved to be, we could understand the attitude of the lords of creation in saying to women: "See what we have done without your help; how can you hope to improve upon the results of this our perfect legislation?"

But the state of things at present warrants women in saying: "If we cannot improve, at least we cannot make a bigger muddle of affairs than you have produced, with your boasted advantages of superior strength, superior education, loftier minds, sublimer ideals, and larger opportunities and experience. We only ask to add to all this a little practical common sense. We, at least, know the value of time, and would not waste it over bogus Bills, in order to shirk the very real and pressing needs of the nation."

We see, then, from their own showing, that the granting of the suffrage to women would produce no great political or social revolution. Their demands are all moderate, just, and elevating, for man and woman alike. Women desire to forward the progress of

humanity towards a higher and purer civilisation, which will include the whole race.

It may be permitted here to cite the example of a country which has recently advanced rapidly in the way of civilisation. In Finland, where women have just received the franchise, Madame Anni Furujelm remarked with reference to the Finnish Diet: "We want only a few good women there. We wish to purify the political atmosphere; we have no special woman's party, but we have a special programme of our own. Amongst other things, we wish for the revision of the marriage laws, and of the status of illegitimate children, and the recognition of woman's economic independence."

They have expressed no desire to rule the world except in the old, sweet way, by rocking the cradle. Thus modern woman, losing none of her true womanliness, none of her love of domesticity, none of the sacred joys of Motherhood, but shaking off much of her dangerous ignorance, her helplessness, her weak sentimentality and her artificiality, will become an ennobling and straightening influence, not only in our domestic but also in our national life.

## CHAPTER VIII

### HOW IT WILL HELP MEN

THE question of how the suffrage will help men may be regarded, even by some women, as of no great consequence, and by others as a somewhat forensic device to enlist sympathy. Most men at the outset will smile sceptically. Yet I am inclined to think that of all the powerful reasons urged in favour of women's suffrage this is, perhaps, the most important. The real standard by which we measure the goodness or badness of any law, is its moral effect on the progress and development of the State. And it is in view of this criterion that we would wish all sympathisers and opponents to weigh these arguments most seriously. Let us first fly to an extreme: let us trace the history of the decline and fall of that empire which was formerly one of the greatest in the world, and which then threatened to overwhelm all Christianity, namely, the Ottoman Empire, as it flourished under the mighty successors of Mahomet the Second. At one time the Moslem Emperors were accustomed to marry the daughters of the rulers of the neighbouring States, and the beautiful Bulgarian, Servian, and Greek ladies aspired to the honour of becoming reigning Sultanas, for that was a position in which the actual power and dominance has rarely been equalled in the history of our planet. With the rise of the Sultan's prestige, correspondingly the Moslem power had reached almost its pinnacle under Bajazet, who was defeated by Tamerlane near Angora, a defeat which was brought about, to some extent, owing to Bajazet's



despising his enemy. In the battle the Sultana of Bajazet was captured, and became the prize of Tamerlane. The pride of the mighty Sultan received a mortal blow, and he resolved that henceforth he would never marry a woman of rank commensurate with his own. From that time the habit set in amongst Turkish Emperors of selecting slave girls, principally Circassians, beautiful in form and feature, but of uncultivated mind, to give charm to their seraglios. The race began to degenerate, and, as the Sultan was the leader of the nation, both in a spiritual and in a material sense, the fortunes of the Turkish Empire having been thus bound up with the personal ruler to a greater extent than has been known in any other country, its decline and fall formed the natural corollary of the gradual degeneration of the race of Sultanas. Here we have, in a conspicuous example, what we may observe in the history of every private family in England. The development of the race physically, mentally, and morally proceeds as fast as, and can proceed no faster than, the development of the women. And that development is thwarted by the conditions under which women are brought up. Education! That is the key-note. We do not mean an education which consists in a smattering of polite accomplishments, which overload the mind to some extent, until forgotten, but an education which means a real e-duc-ing or bringing forth of the natural faculties, mental and physical, of the individual. The Franchise will undoubtedly help in this direction, not merely as giving woman a wider outlook in political matters, but as making her more keen and alert on subjects that concern her own household.

Let us again take an illustration which, by itself, has a look of the incongruous. A friend of mine, who is a blacksmith, suffered from indigestion; he was a strong, powerful man, and the nature of his occupation and his naturally temperate habits should have kept him in the most robust health; but he was as dyspeptic

as any sweated seamstress. I saw the doctor who attended him, and asked him the cause. He replied laughingly: "Well, I was very much puzzled myself, until I walked into his house while his wife was preparing his dinner. That dinner would make an ostrich dyspeptic." I asked him if he had done anything for the man. "Oh!" he replied, again laughing, "I gave him a *placebit*, but to cure him I should have to remove the cause, which was his wife's cooking, and to cure that I should have had to begin some twenty years ago, when she was a girl in her teens." Now this instance may possibly seem grotesque as an argument in favour of the suffrage for women, and would perhaps be so if it stood alone; and yet if we consider that the national life is made up of individual lives, and that the individual life is formed by its routine existence, day after day, we shall see how vastly important to the nation's physique are the questions of domestic surroundings. It could be even figured out on a financial basis, by calculating how much the effective working years of a working man's life are impaired by unhygienic conditions of all sorts. It is not a mere question of cookery. There are questions also of sanitation, personal cleanliness, and those elementary facts of physiology, not necessarily under scientific names, which should be taught to every mother; the question of the care of the general health, care of the body, proper habits of breathing, knowledge of the evil effects of alcohol, and of the nutritive values of food. All this is really superlatively important, and yet not in the least recondite. It might be asked how will votes for women improve these conditions? My answer is, the effect would be produced by them both directly and indirectly. Women, by virtue of their wider influence and wider knowledge, will take more and more active part on those boards and various offices of administration which lie within their province, and, being educated themselves, they will not only direct

things, but will be centres for the diffusion of knowledge. In this way their indirect influence will be produced and their whole status raised. To those who say that "women's proper sphere is her home," this argument should have cogent force. This is the business of the homes of women; just as politics, on a large scale, should have no other meaning than that of being the business of the nation transacted by the citizens through their representatives.

Buckle, one of those philosophers and wide-viewed sociologists who refresh us with draughts of wisdom whenever we turn to them, in his admirable little book, *The Influence of Women*, says: "On every side, in all social phenomena, in the education of children, in the tone and spirit of literature, in the forms and usages of life; nay, even in the proceedings of legislatures, in the history of statute books, and in the decisions of magistrates, we find manifold proofs that women are gradually making their way, and slowly but surely winning for themselves a position superior to any they have hitherto attained." He notes *en passant* the unfavourable position women occupied in Roman and Greek civilisation, and his remarks on the subject are in correspondence with our own reference to the Ottoman Empire, and may be considered as a pendant to them. With respect to modern European society, he says: "If we now inquire what the influence of women has been upon that society, everyone will allow that, on the whole, it has been extremely beneficial. Their influence has prevented life from being too exclusively practical and selfish, and has saved it from degenerating into a dull and monotonous routine, by infusing into it an ideal and romantic element. It has softened the violence of men; it has improved their manners; it has lessened their cruelty."

Even in the larger intellectual field, woman's influence, despite her limited education, has been of considerable value, and here again we refer to a passage from Buckle:



“That, so far from women exercising little or no influence over the progress of knowledge, they are capable of exercising, and have exercised, an enormous influence; that this influence is, in fact, so great that it is hardly possible to assign limits to it; and that, great as it is, it may with advantage be still further increased.”

But why should we stop at any attained position? If movements for the education of women in the past have been productive of good, why should they be resisted when they begin to open up new horizons? Surely it cannot be said that the limit has been reached, either of woman's happiness or of man's development. Evolution has been made familiar to us. It is now an accepted principle, almost a commonplace. Apply it to the race as a whole, and we see at once that our own real evolution as men must march *pari passu* with that of women.

We are familiar with the arguments derived from the British Dominions over the sea. Let us consider for a moment one derived from the very interesting little nation, near to us by distance, though very remote from our centre of things. I quote from a little pamphlet on the subject by Mr. Joseph Howes: “I conscientiously believe that women's influence in politics would be of an elevating and purifying nature. In Iceland we find a nation of seventy-three thousand people, in which man and woman are, *in every respect*, political equals, governed by representatives elected by men and women together. The future citizens are taught by their mothers, and, in the whole island, not a single illiterate is to be found, every child being able to read, write, and cypher by the time it has reached the age of seven. And these voting mothers who educate their own children, have produced a nation in which there are no prisons, no police, no thieves, no enormously rich, no miserably poor; just a plain, temperate, chaste, educated, and intelligent people.”

Then there is the question of drink. An important



and a many-sided question it is. Very often the advocates of temperance, good and sincere men for the most part, miss what may be the exciting motive that drives a man to the public-house. It is not, in all cases, a love of strong liquors in themselves, but in the fact that the public-house is, to some extent, "the poor man's club." It is regrettable that he should have no better club. But we must face the fact that this is often his substitute. He meets there other men who can discuss with him the topics of the day, and in this conversation and gaiety he can forget the dulness of his everyday life. As I heard an eloquent lady from New Zealand recently describe the effects of the suffrage in that country, the man now finds his wife able to keep him company in these affairs; and his neighbour finds the same thing, so that little friendly reunions amongst themselves are much more interesting than formerly, and one of the reasons for resort to the public-house is taken away.

Quite apart from that, women by instinct, and by their experience, are, as a rule, strongly opposed to the drink habit, and of all the evils which afflict a country, and especially its working population, drunkenness is the most terrible. We have become familiar with its horrors, and even in our excited moments we hardly realise to the full the monster that it is. We shudder when we hear of a ship being blown up, or of a desperate battle in which hundreds are slaughtered, but these evils are mild indeed compared with the devastations wrought by the ghoulishness of drink. On this ground alone the influence of women in public affairs will be of incalculable benefit, not only to the State at large, but, in the end, directly to the individual man.

It has been said that women should not obtain the vote "because they are unfitted to make war." That argument will be dealt with elsewhere. Suffice it to say here that, as the whole instinct of woman is opposed to war, the result of associating women with men in the discussion of matters likely to lead to war, would have

very considerable weight in lessening the risks of that dread event.

The arguments against women's using a vote fall to the ground when individual man finds that he is able to make use of women to further his own political ends, for women make good electioneers, and that alone is evidence that they are capable of using the vote themselves which they succeed in gaining for their friends. Mr. Balfour, in a recent speech in favour of Women's Suffrage, twitted some of his opponents on this little point. "The House will understand that I do not wish to introduce personal questions at all, but I think I may take it that every section in this House is only too glad to use the services of women when they think they can profit by them, and it does not lie in the mouths of any of us to say that taking part in framing the policy of the Empire is degrading to the sex. In any other department of human thought than politics, such an argument would be described by no milder word than cant."

Finally, with regard to the influence on man, it may be said that the extension of political powers to women will increase man's sense of chivalry towards women, and give him higher views of domestic conditions. This is, at first sight, opposed to current notions, but, in order to find how true it is, we have only to consider the different countries of Europe and Asia in the order in which the qualities of women are recognised. Where woman is looked upon as a doll, and as a mere toy, there may be a certain show of condescension and indulgence which is insulting to the spirit of the woman and harmful to the moral condition of the man; but there is no real chivalry if he be naturally inclined to be gentle and courteous towards women, simply because he feels that they are the weaker vessels, and have to bear the more trying ordeals in this life. Nor is he likely to dispense with that courtesy towards his sister or her friends, or towards his fiancée, because he finds these

ladies bright and intelligent, able to understand his own difficulties, trials, and embarrassments, to take a large view of his own career, and perhaps to cope with him in his sallies of genial wit.

No, we have not yet arrived at such a point of chivalry that we have no further progress to make. The policemen who cuff, kick, and pinch and twist the wrists of women, guilty, after all, of nothing more than a technical offence, are not Bayards of chivalry. But are the men who watched these scenes, grinning and uttering coarse and cynical jests, the ultimate paragons of the human race?

The influence of the New Woman will be entirely in man's favour, and when at a future time the results are summed up, it will be found that he has been a gainer to the same extent as herself. Thus

“Good the more communicated more abundant grows,  
The Author not impaired, but honoured more.”

## CHAPTER IX

### THEIR MALE OPPONENTS

IT is one of the studies of human nature—often an amusing one—to pick out the opponents of women's suffrage. By what a medical friend of mine calls the "spot diagnosis," one can recognise the character under protean forms in the railway train, the restaurant, the penny 'bus, the public-house, or the club. There is always something foolish-looking about the type, always something ineffective. If one could make a composite photograph of a thousand opponents of women's suffrage taken at random, one would find a curious mixture of self-sufficiency and insufficiency, of pert arrogance and lack of confidence, of assertiveness and incompetence combined.

Let us consider, first of all, the man who opposes the measure "for the sake of women themselves." He is generally full of respect and affection for his mother and his grandmother, and for all his female ancestors, generally attributing to them, in the main, all his own superior qualities. He loves and honours women, "but they should remain in their sphere." He assumes that their chief function in life is to produce masterpieces like himself, and that, having accomplished so much, they may efface themselves as gracefully as possible, so that his own intellect may stand out in clear relief. I know such a man; a very good sort in his mode of life, a peaceable citizen, an essentially commonplace man. He fears to give women a vote, he says, because they are not fitted for politics. It is better that they should not know too much of such things, he fears they will be contaminated



by the mere contact with them. And, in the picture he draws of politics, there is a remarkable abundance of malt and spirituous liquor, bad language, and brutal corruption, and almost the whole list of the horrors denounced in the Decalogue. It is absolutely amazing to hear this peaceable little gentleman launch out in this terrible way on the question of politics. What can have given him these ideas? Is this a really true picture of current politics? And since politics are, after all, nothing but the management of our own affairs in a national sense, by what extraordinary influences have men reduced politics to such a level? And how is it that this mild and undistinguished gentleman has himself passed over such perilous roads and remained sane and uncontaminated? It is truly laughable to behold this inept suburban nonentity, carefully shepherding the whole race of women, and guarding them from the horrors of public business, in much the same style as a prudent mamma might prohibit her daughter, who is about to put up her hair, from reading a novel of Zola or even peeping into the daily newspapers. It cannot really be supposed that women are such nincompoops as this. That is disproved by the reverence which our friend pays to his own maternal relatives, unless we are to suppose that his family alone has a monopoly of the virtues which make men and women prudent and upright. Yet he is but a type of the majority, and so it would appear that each one of these fussy obstructors gives himself needless alarm on an entirely false assumption.

Then there is another type of objector somewhat more oleaginous. He discourses of the "superfine nature of women," "the modest violet," "the delicate bloom," and all the stock cant phrases of the kind. He utters these with the voice of a ladies' doctor, and with the air of flattering himself by listening to his own unctuous language. But after all, maintaining entire respect for women, are we right in regarding them as so many hot-house plants, likely to be withered by every breath of fresh air? Do women themselves believe in all this

nonsense about their delicate bloom likely to be destroyed if they stop to think, or to use their own judgment on matters which practically concern their own lives; and if their delicate bloom exists in the select circles in which our unctuous type alone cares to move, what shall we say of the "pit-brow" lassies, of the factory girls, of the Yarmouth-bloater women, of the caller-herrin' Scotch fishwives, who have no opportunity for cultivating the delicate bloom, but who are nevertheless, in their way, the "backbone" of the nation, and who, at any rate, are practically affected by its laws?

Then I know another type, an elderly judge, a hard man and unsympathetic, who protests that he cannot bear to see any woman doing anything that his "dear mother did not or would not do." He, however, is opposed to all progress. He abhors women who ride bicycles, because his dear mother never did such a thing; and for the same reason he looks askance at those who use the typewriter and practise shorthand. The argument that these exercises may be necessary for their livelihood does not alter his opinion; at a certain point he refuses to look any farther or to suggest any alternative. The argument of his "poor dear mother" is with him final. I am fully inclined to believe that his "poor dear mother" was not such a humbug as he would have us believe, but rather that he uses her as a stalking-horse by which to cover his own limited outlook, and to show off his own prejudices. But suppose that we pursue any of these arguments of his "poor dear mother" to its conclusion, we shall find that she also should have been restricted by the things which *her* "poor dear mother" in turn did not, or would not do, and so it would be thought contrary to good manners to travel by rail, or to embark in a steamship; ultimately we should logically be compelled to consider it a mark of degeneration to adopt other attire than our remote ancestors wore, until, finally, we should arrive at the eponymic fig-leaves of Eve. Arguments of this kind always end in absurdity, and the men who utter them are

really humbugs. Surely it is much more reasonable to suppose that our age in turn, producing new complexities, calling forth new energies and imposing new duties, should therefore be entitled to other privileges. We have already seen that the women of our great-grandmothers' period were in many respects little fitted to be the exemplars to the woman of to-day. The whole progress of the world, the whole meaning of civilisation, would be ridiculous if we were continually to be held in check by what may be quoted to us of the examples of the past. The truth is that this friend of ours is not only a humbug but "a back number" also.

Then there is another type. The man who orates in public meetings in a thoroughly self-satisfied and important manner. Anyone who has attended public meetings knows the type, for he is perennial; the essentially shallow man, who makes a great show, whose stock-in-trade consists of a highly respectable appearance, pompous manner, metallic voice, and list of worn-out platitudes. He is really the kind of man who is most successful in popular assemblies, and he is often a Member of Parliament, and possibly a Cabinet Minister. He declares, for example, that it is utterly preposterous to give women the vote, for they are unable to "think Imperially." He pauses at the words and strikes an attitude, so as to give the audience time to applaud, and, while he denies to women, in this strident fashion, the faculty of "thinking Imperially," there is evidently underlying in his mind the idea that he, at least, is able to "think Imperially," and that the applause of the audience is a subtle incense offered up to his superior intellect. He poses in the limelight like a little tin god, and yet withal, as we have observed, he is an essentially shallow man! This type is perhaps the most hopeless of all, for, not having formed his opinions by reason, reason, in turn, is without weapons wherewith to make any impression upon his intellect. He does not even refer to authority, for he is convinced that his prejudices are like the final appeal of all things.



Then we have Mr. Forcible-Feeble, who, having very little substance in his arguments, tries to eke them out by an absurd insistence: "What I say and I maintain is this, that women are clearly not entitled to the vote, and what is more, as I maintain, they should not get it. That is my opinion, and although it may not, perhaps, be right for me to say so, I consider that it is entitled to some weight—yes, weight, gentlemen. And that disposes of the arguments of women's suffrage."

Then there is the swaggering, bullying type of man-of-business, a hard, unsympathetic, ungainly, unattractive person, who grows rubicund as he declaims violently against women. "Women don't want it, and what's more they shan't get it." His own wife is a pale-faced, timid creature, who dare not call her soul her own, reminding one somewhat of Mrs. Gradgrind in *Hard Times*, and if anyone were to suggest to this individual that perhaps this lady had not attained the *summum bonum* of her possible happiness, he would be extremely indignant, he would exclaim, in effect: "Is she not my wife?" as though that supreme blessing covered all shortcomings arising from other causes.

Then there is the fussy man whose head becomes full of his own importance the moment he is intrusted with any office which brings him into popular notice. I saw one such recently at a meeting where ladies were acting as stewards: he deputed himself to help them and act as general supervisor, bouncing about in the passages and through the doors, making himself the laughing-stock of all. He generally informed them of obvious facts, and offered advice on very simple matters, which excited their laughter, yet he was clearly impressed with the idea that he was "running the show," and that the ladies were greatly struck with his superior practical ability.

Then in contrast with the bullying man we have the henpecked man, who is owned by a strong-minded woman, who is timorous as a rabbit at his own hearth, but who, when he gets beyond range of the vision of his



helpmeet, puffs out his chest and talks large of the "strong sex" and the "weak sex" respectively. This type of man deceives no one; his companions in the railway carriage know him thoroughly; they secretly laugh at him, being aware that, if his better-half heard him speak of the "weaker sex," his punishment would be appropriate and probably sufficient to last him for the ensuing twelve months.

Then there is a very disagreeable type, the young man puppy who thinks it is clever to have cynical notions about women, and who airs his wide opinions upon every possible occasion, falsely supposing that he is giving himself some importance thereby. Even if the men to whom he addresses himself are mainly of the same opinion, their instinctive dislike of the puppy's character rather turns the weight of his arguments into the opposite scale. Perhaps the very young men, medical students and the like, are the most vehement opponents of the rights of women. For this callow brood there is no great hope but patience and time, which bring about more adequate development. It is a remarkable thing that men who, on their own basis, are capable of forming sound judgments, become very cowardly in company. They are afraid to say anything which might be unpopular, or which might lay them open to any shaft of ridicule launched at them by a fool; and perhaps there is no more odious spectacle than to see men led in a mob by some strong unscrupulous spirits, against their own persuasion even overriding their own sympathies, and showing admiration in raucous voices for what they know to be wrong or despicable.

Then we have such a type as General Sir John French, whose distinguished services have made him conspicuous and popular, and who was very much annoyed by a member of his own family's attracting public notice on grounds likely to be condemned in that groove—which, after all, must be narrow and restricted—in which he lives and moves and has his being. Mrs. Despard, who

suffered imprisonment for no overt act of wrong-doing, but simply for espousing the cause of women, is the sister of General French, who, when he referred to her arrest, expressed great annoyance that his name should be associated with such a matter. He publicly denounced Mrs. Despard, and referred in a very scornful and contemptuous way to her friends. Now Sir John French is, of course, entitled to hold strong views on women's suffrage. — The military mind invariably holds strong views on all subjects within its purview, even if they are out of its province; and there is generally but one remedy suggested by it, and that is to crush opposition by brute force. But it might have occurred to Sir John French that Mrs. Despard, on her part, was clearly entitled to her own opinions, and that if she believed in the goodness of the cause, it was all the more creditable to her to be prepared to bravely sacrifice her own personal comfort, in order to advance such principles as she conscientiously advocates. Would it not have been better, and even more dignified, on the part of Sir John French, if he had said: "Although Mrs. Despard is my sister, I do not hold the same views on this question as she does. If she were to follow my advice she would not agitate in this manner. However, I recognise that she has thought the matter out for herself. She is quite as competent to form a judgment as I am, and, having taken her course, I cannot but admire the sincerity and the generosity of the courage she has displayed, in furthering the cause which she believes will be of real service to her sex"?

Had he so spoken, the great world would have applauded, and even the feather-headed dandy, whose ridicule he seemed to fear, would have been reduced to silence and compelled to acknowledge the good spirit of the man.

## CHAPTER X

### THEIR FEMALE OPPONENTS

WE have examined some of the types of the male opponents of the extension of the suffrage to women, and we have found that, underlying their opposition, there was in great part no actual reasoning, their arguments seeming to consist of the expression of vague fears, crass stupidity, selfishness, or pure *cussedness*. Similar types are to be found among the women opponents, and, in addition, we find some which present more interesting studies in psychology, and yet others who prove the woe-ful results of the past system of limiting woman's outlook, and encouraging her to regard man, in all things, as a superior and omnipotent being, instead of teaching her to use her faculties to help herself—and her men folk also.

At first it might appear that the "anti-suffragette," as she styles herself, in her anonymous communications to the daily Press, is merely a dog-in-the-manger type of person. "We don't want it, but you shan't have it," is often the tenor of these outpourings; but if we go farther we shall find that there is variety also in this species.

First, we have the genuinely stupid woman, who has received some "education," or rather, let us say, *teaching*, which she has been unable to assimilate. She recognises her stupidity, and candidly acknowledges it, which admission, by the bye, shows a distinct advance on her male prototype. She honestly thinks man is a great fellow, who performs a truly difficult and dangerous feat when he registers his vote. She considers that she is,

and therefore that all other women are, by comparison, but very poor creatures indeed. When asked if she is in favour of "Votes for Women," she says: "Oh, don't ask me, I am too stupid; I think women ought to leave those things to men."

A more enlightened sister who was endeavouring to open the eyes of such a woman, on mentioning the fact that Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria were amongst the first politicians of their respective periods, received the following reply: "Oh, but Elizabeth was wicked, and Mr. Gladstone or Lord Beaconsfield always told Queen Victoria what she had to do!" As the suffragist afterwards remarked: "Such a type of woman is hopeless, and were she abundant, would make one despair of our cause"; but her husband was still worse, for he considered her reply clever, and said *his* wife was "not one of those women who want the breeches!" One can almost respect such colossal fatuity.

Another type of female opponent may be best described as the Worm. She is the product of generations of the teaching that woman should remain at home, bear children, mend socks, go to church or chapel, and never think of disputing man's august right to do with her, and for her, whatsoever he wills. That she, and therefore any other woman, should form, much less express, an opinion of her own would shock this creature painfully. If a ray of light approaches her she wriggles uncomfortably, and perhaps a little angrily, back to her underground darkness, and there forgets that not far off there is space, freedom, and air. She has acquired a positive distaste for these things by reason of her long burrowing. No! she does *not* want to have anything to do with wider matters.

It is not so much from selfishness as from apathy that this type of woman loves darkness better than light. Her husband may beat and kick her, be openly rude and contemptuous, or forsake her for another woman, or do all three of these things, and she will still believe that he



has a right to thus conduct himself, because he is a man ! This worm never turns, except when some more energetic woman proclaims that *she* desires to alter such conditions. Then there is a feeble protest : " We do not want these things forced upon us " ; " Women are born to suffer, blessed be the name of the Lord ! " etc. I have heard a man refer to his wife, a woman of this type, as his " vermiform appendix ! " It struck me as an apt description of the woman of this degenerate sort.

A more dangerous type is the light, frivolous, butterfly woman, who lives for dress, admiration, society, and amusement, and does not care a button for either home or the State. She is much admired by the male puppy, and indeed by most men, except, perhaps, her own immediate relatives. She shrieks with laughter at the bare idea of women wanting anything but what *she* may happen to wish for, and with a shallow wit just suited to her admiring, if not respecting, circle, ascribes very unpleasant motives to those who are working for a noble cause, motives which flatter and delight her audience, and inspire in them vain ideas of their own importance in the eyes of women, but which by no means tend to increase their respect for the sex as a whole. Herein lies the danger from the flippant butterfly, for by her superficial charm she has a certain influence upon those who are incapable of looking below the surface.

For the sickly, sentimental, fiction-fed type of young woman, naturally, a wider outlook presents no attractions. I have known her to remain engrossed in her novelette while the papers were filled with the disastrous news of our reverses in South Africa. When her attention was called to the facts, she would look up vacantly, and exclaim : " What a pity ! " then promptly return to the romance of " My Lord Cuthbert, " wherein the pretty governess, in the end, proved to be no other than " the Lady Hyacinth, " etc. etc. For this type, though seemingly hopeless, there is yet a way out. If the " Lady Hyacinth " wished to better her conditions, and thought

she could help to do so by having a voice in their making, then our sentimental one would also lose the idea that no "heroine" could desire a vote, and she might gradually shake off her Lydia Languish airs. Perhaps, too, a reaction may set in after a surfeit of such sickly pabulum, and produce a craving for more wholesome literary diet. Her stock phrases are: "The woman should always give in"; "A woman needs someone to look up to"; "Men don't like women who talk politics."

Then there is the grandmotherly housekeeping Martha type of female objector, who corresponds to my old friend the judge. "What was good enough for our grandmothers, ought to be good enough for us." She is, perhaps, not quite so reactionary as the judge, for she does not object to cycling, tennis-playing, and physical development. It is only at anything tending to independence that she shies. This class will fade away finally at that period in the history of our nation when she can no longer say: "Our grandmothers did not want the vote."

These types of anti-suffragists are the outcome of our false system with regard to women. They are not actively opposed to their more advanced sisters, so long as they themselves are left to their enjoyable ignorance and stupidity, to their accustomed burrow, to their irresponsibilities, to their novelettes, and to their homes.

I was, however, very much surprised to find an altogether different type of woman refusing to support the demand for citizenship, a type represented by earnest, well-educated, reasoning, intellectual women, who take an interest in all that concerns their homes, and in our national life in all its aspects. These women, whose conversation is infinitely more elevating, and whose views are broader and more enlightened, than those of many of their men folk, remained silent and unmoved when the question was mentioned. The key to this apparent and unexpected indifference was quite unconsciously given me by one of their own sex, who requested me

“not to mention the suffrage at Lady A’s, or at Mrs. B’s,” because it was “kinder not to do so”; “it would make them feel so humiliated. They would like to say, openly, that they are in favour of the suffrage, but they simply *dare not*, because of their husbands.”

I had never realised before that the subjection of the white woman had become so established and acknowledged a fact, that intelligent and superior women dare not even express an opinion of their own, unless their masters approved. My friend further told me of another lady, who had confided to her that her husband, unable to argue the case, decided that he would not speak to her again if she either took any part in the suffrage movement, or expressed herself as in favour of it. Yet this man talks very proudly and confidently of “the freedom we enjoy in this country,” and he maintains “that nobody shall dictate to him!”

These women, who are thus forced to be anti-suffragists, are greatly to be sympathised with. It is true that they could, by sacrificing the peace of their homes, assert their right to express their opinion, but, for the sake of others concerned, they accept the humiliating alternative. In all fairness these women should not be included in the list of anti-suffragists.

Next we have the “respectability” type, of limited vision, to be found in all classes of society, from peeresses to sempstresses. Their idea is that it shows a lack of “good form” to want anything which custom has not hitherto sanctioned. This type firmly believes that every woman who desires a vote must necessarily march on the House of Commons; that she takes pleasure in a furious fight with policemen and a finish up in Holloway! “Don’t mention the word *suffrage* to me”; “I am ashamed of my sex,” etc. etc., is what one hears.

These ladies cannot see, no matter how plainly it may be put to them, that the action of a certain section of women has nothing to do with the principle of freedom, or with the justice of a cause. They cannot



believe that these women resorted to aggressive means only after years of constitutional methods; that, greatly against their inclination, they felt such means to be the only ones which would prove that they were "in earnest." The Social and Political Union is but one party of the women's movement, and, though I will not discuss their methods here, I cannot altogether wonder that they make use of the most vigorous mode of emphasising their demands when I see the prominence now given to the question through the Press, which persistently ignored, for many years, the vast army of workers on so-called "constitutional lines." As an instance I notice the *Daily Mail* of 27th March, which devoted nearly a column to an account of one young girl suffragette, a member of the Women's Social and Political Union, who had been arrested while publishing only a few lines by way of a report of an enthusiastic meeting of some 3500 constitutional suffragists at the Queen's Hall; a meeting which was addressed by well-known Members of Parliament, and by our wittiest playwright, Mr. Bernard Shaw, as well as by several very eloquent women speakers.

Many women of the wealthy classes regard the suffrage merely from their own selfish, personal point of view. One lady, a Dowager Countess, stated that she was opposed to women's having the vote because she had never herself experienced the need of one! I am quite sure she never did; nor did she ever toil all day for the munificent wage of five farthings per hour! This lady, by the way, was not inclined to disregard politics altogether, she only wished "to officer them from superior heights"; but after all, the effect of our laws is of greater importance for the toiling masses, and how can the Dowager Countess's example appeal to the dame who has never officered anything above the height of her washing-tub?

Another distinguished lady declared that she found her property well enough administered under present



laws, and she did not desire any change. This reminds one somewhat of the self-satisfied exclamation of a certain politician who exclaimed: "Why is Ireland poor? I'm not." The purview of this distinguished lady does not extend beyond her own domains, the rest of the world does not exist for her. There is something almost tragic in confessions of exquisite selfishness such as these. One can imagine her, sniffing in aristocratic pride and elegant insouciance, at the multitudinous miseries of London. "Unemployed and starving—what stuff! I have just had a charming lunch of quail in aspic and champagne!"

Another plea of these ladies is that they would lose the influence they already possess. Again, we see that there is no intention, on their part, of standing out of politics altogether. They simply wish to prevent other women from enjoying their due share of legitimate influence, which the possession of the vote would give them.

Miss Ermine Taylor, who is the secretary of the Anti-suffrage movement, uses the argument that women are too much influenced by clergymen, and this, she thinks, unfits them for the exercise of the vote. But again we repeat that the suffrage represents only a part of the general educational movement amongst women; and that when they secure more independence in this regard, they will emancipate themselves from any undue control. Of course there are clergymen and clergymen — clergymen representing every shade of theological and political opinion, and each one is entitled to use his influence in a fair way. The evil of unfair pressure seems to exist now, according to Miss Ermine Taylor, and it will tend to become eliminated when women are stimulated by new opportunities.

The modest type is an amusing one. These violets (or sometimes primroses) are shocked at their sisters for desiring to leave the shelter of their homes, once in three or four years, for the purpose of registering a

vote. We find the "milk-white lamb," as we may also describe her in Keats' phrase, rushing from the fold and bleating piteously—through the medium of some really expensive halfpenny daily—for man to protect her against her fellow-woman. "We will not have this thing forced upon us." I blush for my sex, and I take this opportunity of protesting. "It will spoil our influence." Run back to your folds, then, gentle and "dignified" petitioners, you can blush *there* as snugly as ever! No one will force a vote upon you. You are indeed unfit for it, and have proved your inefficiency! Such as you might make us hesitate as to the ripeness of the cause.

It is above the comprehension of these opponents, that the true modern woman can have any ambition beyond their own petty aims of social triumph, or possess a desire to help the less fortunate ones of this world, on a larger and a better plan, than by charitable bazaars or charitable doles.

I must not omit the "cradle-rocking" type; she is present at every meeting on the subject of women's suffrage. She is generally a dowdy, prim individual, who shrills forth: "I have always heard that *the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.*" Oh! If Longfellow could but know how that line of his has been used as a means to weaken and degrade that "rocking hand" of women! Just so, she has "always heard," and that disposes of the question, and entitles her to her irritating air of cocksureness and conscious "womanliness." Naturally she has never heard of hands that have no chance to rock a cradle; nor that cradle-rocking occupies but a limited number of years, even in the humdrum life of a curate's wife.

It is with surprise and regret that I am compelled to place the name of a woman of such intellectual powers as Mrs. Humphry Ward among the opponents of women's suffrage. I can only account for this anomaly, by adopting the idea of many other people,

namely, that Mrs. Ward had not considered the subject seriously when her letter against the movement was written, and that she will eventually make another and very different pronouncement. She can afford to do so. How can a lady, who, apart from her literary productions, has conceived and organised many beneficial public works, stop short at the suffrage?

Several others of our well-known women writers have also ranged themselves against this movement. Helen Mathers, whose name is almost a household word, opposes, because she considers that men will not love and respect women if they have an interest in the destinies of their country. She is, I think, contradicted by the general love and respect accorded to our late Queen, who took a very practical part and a deep interest in the affairs of State. My admiration for Helen Mathers causes me to hope to see her on our side ere long.

Rita also has the same fears as Miss Mathers, that men could not love or respect a woman who possessed the right to vote. Well, I took in all the daily papers the day after the women had voted for the London County Councillors, fearing hideous results after these women had lost the love and respect of men. I looked, later, for an increase of infant mortality in their homes, as compared with those who had not ventured to the poll: but nothing serious has happened to these women, or to their dependants; they continue the normal tenor of their ways, quite uninjured by their lapse on election day.

So cheer up, Rita. You and your sisters will yet be loved and respected a great deal more, for, as someone said: "Who would be uncivil to a possible elector?"

Miss Marie Corelli does not state her views with the conciseness of Rita and Helen Mathers. Her opposition extends to some forty pages in *Woman or Suffragette? A Question of National Choice*. I have read Marie Corelli's brochure attentively, not because I thought it a



serious contribution to the question, but simply as an unconscious revelation of Marie Corelli's mental composition. All arguments, all ideas, all prejudices, all resentments, spring from Marie Corelli's standpoint. A very subjective lady is Marie Corelli, whose pamphlet might more fittingly be called "*Marie Corelli's Apologia pro Vitâ Suâ.*" Here is a delectable tit-bit from its pages: "I venture to say to my distracted, man-fighting sisters that I am just a woman among women, and yet—not a 'suffragette.' I claim no more rights than are already mine to the full—and as for wanting a vote, why should I? As matters stand at present I can win for any candidate, in whom I may happen to be interested, at least forty or fifty votes—perhaps more."

Here is another passage of autobiography: "From very early years I have had to work hard and continuously for myself; and I have never been indebted to any man for the least assistance or support in the making of my career; on the contrary, many a man has been indebted to me for a helping hand out of difficulty. I earn every pound I possess; I am a householder, pay rates and taxes, and I employ men who depend upon me for their wages, these men having a 'right' to vote, while I have none. Why then do I not insist on this denied 'right'?—this political privilege of voting? Why? Because, frankly and honestly I do not want it; and again, why?"

The question might very well have been argued without entering into all these domestic details, however interesting they may be to Marie Corelli and her admirers. The whole question might indeed be considered without specially taking Marie Corelli into account at all, though she confirms, in her own particular instance, the arguments sometimes employed by men,—that women cannot take more than a personal view of any subject, that they are incapable of looking at a question on general lines and in an objective way. But luckily Miss Corelli also supplies the antidote, for the whole tenor of her little book is to the effect that she is the one and only Marie



Corelli, the peerless being of her sex. She says: "For if she is a real Woman—if she has the natural heritage of her sex, which is the mystic power to persuade, enthral, and subjugate men, she has no need to come down from her throne and mingle in any of his political frays, inasmuch as she is already the very head and front of Government."

Marie Corelli is specially severe on the ladies of the Christobel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney type: "Romance flies from riot; poetry and idealism furl their wings like frozen butterflies, and drop to the ground." In other words, there would be "a slump" in Marie Corelli's novels, and yet such is the obduracy of human nature that many would survive even that, and still welcome Christobel Pankhurst.

Here again we have an indication of the reason why Marie Corelli can dispense with the suffrage: "Charm, grace of manner, easy eloquence, and exquisite restraint, are all, or should be all, essentials of the feminine endowment, and these are conspicuously lacking in the 'suffragette's' composition."

Look on this picture and on that, compare the character of the suffragist with that exquisite restraint which the very name of Marie Corelli inevitably suggests.

Another reason why Miss Corelli objects to the vote is found in these lines: "In fact, as a means of temporary flirtation and evanescent love-making, destined to end with the end of the election, women's suffrage could hardly be surpassed. Perhaps this, after all, is the real object of the impetuous movement! Who knows?" But, according to Miss Corelli, the chief arts by which woman must retain her present noble possession are all of them of a similar nature: "The clever woman sits at home, and like a meadow spider spreads a pretty web of rose and gold spangled with diamond dew. Flies, or men, tumble in by scores, and she holds them all prisoners at her pleasure with a golden strand as fine as a hair. Nature gave her, at her birth, the 'right' to do

this, and if she does it well, she will always have her web full."

So that whichever way we turn, we find Marie Corelli obsessed by the idea of fascinating women inveigling helpless men into their toils. Marie Corelli is fond of quoting Shakespeare. There is always a fine association between these two Swans of Avon. One passage is reminiscent of Ben Jonson's memorable description of Captain Bobadil's method of defeating an army. We know that the famous swashbuckler only wanted forty men as good as himself. Here is Marie Corelli's scheme for obtaining a victory from the Commons: "A charming woman likes to make the most of her charm—and she is perfectly justified in looking as lovely as she can, by natural and hygienic means. She knows that a sweet, wholesome, lovely, womanly face and form, must needs create a sweet, wholesome, and lovely influence. Indeed, I am not at all sure whether, if a bevy of dainty, beautiful, exquisitely dressed women were to quietly enter the lobby of the House of Commons, and there plead with tuneful eloquence and reasonable dignity for their 'suffrage,' they might not so bedazzle and bewilder the members, as to cause these gentlemen to lose their heads entirely—even to the extent of granting them anything and everything on the spot."

Miss Corelli, in her moments of argument, treats the matter entirely from the wealthy woman's point of view. For her poorer sisters she has never a thought. She begins by declaring that women openly and grossly neglect their highest duties, viz., their domestic ones, and demands in the same breath: "Shall we throw open the once sweet and sacred homes of England, to the manoeuvres of the electioneering agent?"

The home does not consist of women only, even a male worm must turn at such a suggestion; and yet he has always opened his door to the electioneering agent. And when Marie Corelli's type of woman is "indirectly" influencing man with her charms and fascinations, why is

*she*, then, not an electioneering agent? Then she tells us, with all her exuberant eloquence, about the effects of the past system of placing men before women, which has been ruinous to both, and she also agrees that women have quite as good brains as men.

Then, oh! will not the German nation now be gratified? She declares, after some curious statements about music, mathematics, and politics, delightfully though unconsciously amusing—for humour is not always Miss Corelli's strong point—that no woman's name can be added to those of Handel, Beethoven, Mozart, Chopin, Berlioz, Schumann, and Wagner, as that of a great composer. No, it is true; nor can any Englishman's name be added, nor American's either. Must it follow, therefore, that our politics like music are to be "made in Germany"? It may be so one day, but not for the reason advanced! The average English girl or woman is more musical than the average Englishman; every educated woman can talk intelligently of these composers, and recognise the qualities of their work, while the average man rather prides himself on not knowing or caring anything about them, and is really bored with anything in music beyond musical comedy and the melodies of the Gaiety Girls. The whole argument is absurd—but *it is Marie Corelli's!*

"Shall we sacrifice our Womanhood to Politics? Shall we make a holocaust of maidens, wives and mothers on the brazen altars of Party? Shall we throw open the once sweet and sacred homes of England to the manœuvres of the electioneering agent?" Marie Corelli in another part of her pamphlet quotes an example of a sweet and sacred home: "A charwoman, who had repeatedly had her earnings squandered by a worthless husband, charged him with stealing her money, and was informed that 'a wife has no power to take criminal proceedings against her husband.' A husband may prosecute his wife, but apparently the money she may earn is not her own, in spite of the general impression that the Married Women's Property Act gave her an independent position in this respect."



“This, to put it bluntly, means that the man may be a thief, with the law’s full permission, provided he steals from his wife! One can scarcely be surprised to hear that marriage is becoming unpopular.”

Precisely. The law needs amendment, and that is one of the arguments which we put forward in favour of women’s suffrage.

The following is a cryptic saying of Miss Corelli’s: “The political gamut has little more than seven tones, or up and down gradations of movement.” I think a lady capable of proving this statement, if it has any meaning at all, ought to have a chair as “Professor of Politics” in one of our universities, and by instructing us in the “seven tones and up and down gradations of movement” win world-wide renown (although this would not appeal to so retiring a nature), by reducing politics to a musico-mathematical study in “seven tones.”

Marie Corelli treats us to one of Dante’s beautiful love sonnets. It is not much in keeping with the rest of her pamphlet, but it shows clearly that so great a love as Dante’s would never willingly have held women back but rather would have increased as she came forward to man’s side. Mary Shelley, the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft, inspired some of Shelley’s best songs.

Miss Corelli’s respectability received a distinct shock because a lady suffragist declared that she and her friends would not be afraid to face the Horse Guards or a hose-pipe in defence of what is, to them, a great principle. How scandalised would Miss Corelli have been at the outrageous conduct of the virgin martyrs of old, who faced the lions in the cause of what they considered right. Brazen hussies! How dreadful they must have looked when the wild beasts mauled and tore them! And yet Marie Corelli would have us think “all that she looks upon is made pleasanter.”

Miss Corelli quotes in full a letter written to Mr. Labouchere by an anonymous “non-suffragette,” with whom she agrees, and says that she “burns with shame”



at being associated in a common sex with the more militant section of the Women's Social and Political Union, "who . . . behaved more like drunken men than even the worst of female viragoes."

Now, a lady who utters such piteous moans at the frequent misrepresentation of herself by the Press, ought to go and see for herself before judging her sisters by mere reporters' stories. Those who really saw, even those most opposed to the action of the women, could tell a very different tale.

Speaking for Shakespeare, Miss Corelli then tells us how much he would have appreciated Mr. Tree's setting of his plays, and sets up his Cleopatra as a study for women. Here again we agree. Cleopatra is represented as endowed with veritable gifts of statesmanship, and yet she has by no means lost the power of loving and being loved. As Miss Corelli says, Shakespeare knew women; some of his women are models of the best of our modern women. Portia overcame the great masculine force of Shylock, not by depending on her womanly fascination, but by leaving her home, donning male attire, and fighting man with weapons which proved to be keener than his own. Yet, on her return, Bassanio loved and revered her the more. Portia did not shrink bleatingly from taking part in scenes generally considered only fit for men, when there was a question of helping others. She did not sit at home, like the clever Marie Corelli woman, spider-like, spinning pretty spangled webs in "which flies—or men—tumble in by scores!"

After this Miss Corelli again attacks "the majority of men." We leave her the full responsibility for this passage: "Of course, if we take a merely superficial view of women all over the world, their main objects of existence would seem to be marrying and breeding, and they show themselves so universally at one on this point, that it is no wonder man refuses to think they can be moved by any higher aims than those which they share equally with the rabbit and the moth."

She buffets us mere Adams again, until we feel sore because of the manner in which brilliant women are scorned. Yes, Marie Corelli has suffered. Then, after hunting woman into her home, Miss Corelli rails at her for taking interest in "toothsome culinary recipes," the care of the hair and hands; and in the remarks on dress given in the columns of the papers headed "Women's Interests," she is horrified that there should be printed, under that title, such things as the length of veils and the number of tabs to be worn. (What are tabs?) Tabs of course may be shocking, and Madeira embroidery may be indecent, so I leave them, and go on to the scarves, which I know to be perfectly decorous, although the price mentioned be only 10s. 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. Now, women who sit at home, or work at home, must needs know how long to wear their veils, and how many tabs to put on; and what more simple way to ascertain these important details than to glance at the Women's Column?—and surely a woman who cannot afford to pay several guineas, or even 15s. for a scarf, may be glad to know where to get one at 10s. 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.

Then Miss Corelli objects to the suffrage, because of the "unblushing" advertisements of pads and wigs in the fashion books, and asks: "Do women imagine that men never look at such papers?" Well, men write, design, print, and publish them, so why should they not look at them? The advertisements are not only unblushing, but ugly and improper. I have heard a too optimistic suffragist remark that a woman censor should be appointed to prevent such things. This is not a bad suggestion, but not until woman has a much stronger position will my young friend's hope be realised.

On page 31, Miss Corelli complains that women are "too spiteful to one another to convince men of their sincerity of character. They are also much too individually egoistic in their likes and dislikes," and as a pendant to this she sets forth the following interesting little parable: "For example, let us suppose a woman to have

enjoyed the special admiration and favour of a king. In due course, and in accordance with the conventional and historical custom of royal fickleness, suppose the king to grow weary of the lady's fascinations. And—to continue our hypothesis—suppose the fair one, piqued at the cessation of the kingly compliments, should straightway turn Socialist. What sincerity could there possibly be in her Socialism? All the common-sense world would recognise the real underlying motive for such a 'political' change—they would see in it nothing but a mere feminine ebullition of cheap spite and personal irritation, which, had the woman in question been really clever, she would never have shown. The really clever woman would have caught another king, and made the first one jealous." Miss Corelli seems to argue that if she had a vote, her forty or fifty males would prove faithless; but this is surely Miss Corelli's false modesty. A really clever woman and one with such extraordinary power over us degenerate Adams would just catch another "forty or fifty," and make the faithless ones jealous!

We might almost take leave of Marie Corelli here after this expression of feminine wit and morality. But perhaps the great point of all her opposition—"the sorrowful part of it"—is this, "one never sees any pretty women among those who clamour for their 'rights.'" But, really, Miss Corelli, even an angry Press sees them with a less jaundiced eye, and acknowledges their comeliness—even by comparison. I could publish, here, the pictures of several pretty and beautiful women who are in favour of political freedom, but—here Miss Corelli will sympathise with them—these ladies would object to have their pictures on every bookstall, notwithstanding all the spiteful things said about their looks, their dress, their manners, and even their reputations.

## CHAPTER XI

### ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE SUFFRAGE CONSIDERED

IN the preceding part of this book we have incidentally considered various points which have arisen in the course of the discussion, but it may be well to deal with the actual arguments advanced in the House of Commons by those members who have been instrumental in defeating successive Bills for conferring the franchise on women. Time, however, marches so rapidly that we may make a beginning in March 1905, for Mr. Labouchere, who was then the "lion in the path," has now become a back number in the political world. This is regrettable for some reasons; for Mr. Labouchere, who was not always a model of sound wisdom, was at least something of a wag, when in the vein. Perhaps he derived some amusement in spinning out his humorous remarks, thus influencing the august assembly, not by any very profound philosophy, but by killing time; not scoring from the profundity of his arguments so much as by their inordinate length. This was so on the occasion of the Women's Enfranchisement Bill, introduced by Mr. (now Sir) Bamford Slack on 12th May 1905.

Mr. Labouchere referred to John Stuart Mill, who, he said, was not really in favour of giving the franchise to all women, but only to those having special qualifications. Now, let us note the character of the logic which is supposed to be a special heritage of man, and which we might expect to find in a high state of development in the great representative assembly of the Empire. Mr. Labouchere quotes Mill as an authority and advances that



authority as in itself a conclusive argument. Mill himself, however, was the last person in the world to substitute mere authority for reasoning. He endeavoured always to base his own position on natural laws or on consequences rationally derived from them. We cannot expect any profundity of this kind from Mr. Labouchere. But, on the question of authority alone, how can he explain the fact that he was content to accept John Stuart Mill in regard to women who did not come up to a certain standard; while evidently considering Mill a bad guide and repudiating him in respect of his advocacy of the claims of those women who were above a certain standard of education and mental efficiency? Mr. Labouchere, in fact, simply resorted to a forensic trick, such as is more likely to be successful in the House of Commons than is any product of serious and patient thought. Since John Stuart Mill has been mentioned, let us say once and for all, that most of us would be content to accept him as a guide on a matter of this kind. The franchise for women who have reached a certain standard—no doubt a very liberal one in Mill's mind—would at least be a beginning—the thin end of the wedge, if you like! Nearly forty years have passed since Mr. Labouchere had his conversation with Mill. During that epoch the basis of representation has been greatly extended amongst men, so that, in view of the conditions holding at the present time, John Stuart Mill would find himself—should he ever happen to be reincarnated—in complete agreement with any of the Women's Suffrage Bills introduced in recent years.

Mr. Labouchere goes on to say that he opposed the Bill "as a Radical and a Democrat." As usual, in Mr. Labouchere's speech, there is what the old logicians would have called *ignoratio elenchi*, that is to say a lack of reasonable connection between the premisses and the conclusion. The question of women's rights is not a party one at all. We have in our ranks, as advocates of the suffrage, Democrats and Radicals as consistent as Mr. Labouchere,

and we have also Conservatives whose sincerity may compare with his own, and we have every shade of variety of politician in between. The question is a broad one of justice, and we must endeavour to keep it out of the intrigues of party machines as much as possible. However, "to return to our muttons," that is to say to Mr. Labouchere, he declares that one reason why women must not have the vote is that "they cannot act as soldiers."

Of course, it would be possible to cite a multitude of cases in the past where women have acted as soldiers. The most marvellous soldier the world ever knew, whose exploits were so extraordinary as to seem to belong to the region of romance and legend, rather than to history, was a woman—Joan of Arc.

However, let us abandon arguments of this sort, and look at the other side of this matter. Are men given votes because they are soldiers? Or are those men deprived of votes who are physically unfitted to be soldiers? This soldier argument is simply one of those superficial pleas, which a man of Mr. Labouchere's intelligence could hardly believe to possess any validity, but which he probably thought good enough to serve out to the intelligence of his audience. Mr. Labouchere was never a soldier; not 1 per cent of his audience who cried "Hear, hear," had ever served as soldiers, perhaps only a small percentage of them were capable of standing a campaign had they been called upon to do so. Yet they represented the highest voting power, something far beyond the mere possession of the franchise.

If a man is a hunchback, or consumptive, or in the last stage of heart disease, or short-sighted, or deaf and dumb, or afflicted with any one out of a hundred ailments which would disqualify a candidate for admission to the army, he is not, on that account, deprived of his vote; and if he has a vote, and at the same time suffers from any of these disabilities, he will probably look down on the common soldier—"except when the band begins to play"

—because he helps to pay the taxes which go to the support of the army.

Our army is not, at present, a citizen army at all. It is, in fact, a mercenary army, although the mercenaries are taken for the most part from the unemployed of our own country; and the crowning irony of such an argument, which perhaps Mr. Labouchere enjoyed, but which none of the others seem to have perceived, is that the moment a man becomes a soldier *he loses his vote!* Let us look at these arguments in the face steadily, one by one, and we shall see what preposterous stuff is capable of being made use of to obstruct our way to a reasonable solution of things.

Mr. Labouchere, moreover, says that women cannot act as policemen. The police force here is a comparatively recent institution. Women's demand for the vote was made long before the creation of the police, and, at the present time, experiments are being made in certain Continental places—notably in Ghent—with bodies of women guards for the city. The argument of the policemen rests on much the same basis as that of the soldier. They are supported by the taxes levied on the people. Women help to pay these taxes. They are organised to protect life and property, and these matters concern women in exactly the same manner as they concern men.

Mr. Labouchere went on to say, that as civilisation increased, hard manual labour was taken out of the hands of women. This is again one of these shallow assertions which will not stand scrutiny. How about the Lancashire operatives, the chain-makers, the pit-brow lassies, the laundry-women, not to speak of our familiar necessity, the charwoman? But, again, we are met with the absolute incoherence of Mr. Labouchere's argument, because it is precisely those women who do hard manual labour whom the majority of the opponents of women's rights wish to exclude. And even in the case of men, the fact of performing hard manual labour is anything but a passport to the vote, for it often happens that the more arduous the physical labour the more meagre the pay.



Mr. Labouchere said it was not the fault of women that they were "more beautiful than muscular." But, again, how many members of the House of Commons have secured their privileges because they were either muscular or beautiful?

We will continue with Mr. Labouchere—he is a fund of good things even when he least intends it. "Every man," he said, "knew what it was to work with a woman"—and the House laughed, for Mr. Labouchere was really a brilliant clown on this occasion! I say it appreciatively. His words should be read in connection with his inimitable manner. He continued: "A woman would lay down her views, and although it was conclusively proved to her that she was wrong, she would continue to repeat her old arguments." Again there was much laughter, and, after all, did not these words most aptly describe the style of our opponents themselves?

Take this quotation, for instance, from a paper which generally reaches the high-water mark of argumentative power, the influential *Spectator*: "Our objection is based, not on any alleged inferiority of women, but solely on the fact that they are women and not men, and on our belief that the grant of the suffrage and the power of legislation would not be beneficial to the State. The State rests, in the last resort, on force. It is conceivable that on some great question the opinion of the men and of the women in a community might be adverse. In that case either the physically weak must prevail over the stronger, or there must be a revolution. We shall not willingly consent to founding the State on such a dilemma. But though this argument is to our mind irrefutable, we do not desire, in this case, to rely upon logic, but on that which is far stronger in matters fundamental. Instinct rejects the proposal to give the supreme voice in the State to women, and on that instinct we believe it to be wisest to rely."

When Mr. Labouchere dealt with the argument of Queen Victoria, he said it must be remembered that the



Queen could only act on the advice of her Ministers, and, in his opinion, it would be easier for a woman to act as a Queen than to act as a simple voter. Once more, is there any sense in words like these? Does any reasonable being believe that it requires less intelligence, less activity, less publicity, to play such a part as that of Queen Victoria, than to read the newspapers and record a vote once in four years? Yet that argument of Queen Victoria must be definitely faced. Queen Victoria was not a phenomenon; she represented in her sphere capacities towards which the great bulk of intelligent women gravitate.

Again, Mr. Labouchere says that only a very few women, and those of masculine mind, take an interest in politics or desire the vote. In this phrase we come down from the air of high fantastic argument to plain matter of fact. The declaration prepared by Miss Clementina Black is meant to test that very question. Although it is far from being complete, for it has circulated in comparatively few localities, already the signatures of women who demand the franchise amount not to a few thousands but to TENS OF THOUSANDS; and they will, no doubt, finally number HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS. Another argument which Mr. Labouchere used, and which is the sort of stock objection for those who have their thinking done for them, is that: "As there are more women than men in the country, if the franchise were established it would mean the surrender of the whole government of the country to the women." Now compare this with the argument that women do not want votes, and the positions are mutually exclusive. Yet the same man will continue to make use of both arguments, proving thereby that he has never properly sounded the ground of either the one or the other.

It is evident that not all women want votes; not all men, even, make use of their votes. Some women are very keen on the vote, others consider themselves entitled to it by right, and others, perhaps, only take a languid

interest in the matter; so that the result would be that only the more intelligent and active-minded would in any way influence the course of an election. There would be no such event as surrendering the whole government of the State to women. But what Mr. Labouchere delivered himself of as a licensed jester, our weaker brethren pipe forth as a strong argument.

Mr. Labouchere then proceeded to bring down the House in his own *Lion comique* style: "Now, would it really be desirable to turn this venerable and respectable Parliament into an arena with a promiscuity of sexes? (Laughter.) He thought it would be most undesirable. There were young men here. (Laughter.)"

Well, that is, after all, going on a little too fast; and it is not altogether a serious way of dealing with a question to suggest what might possibly, or might not, happen, as an ulterior consequence. The House of Commons does not at present wish to admit women. Their admission might, some day, come up again, as a special consideration, but about that, at present, we need have nothing to say.

Mr. Labouchere continued in his old sweet way: "Boys and girls were not taught together, and they did not have juries of women." Here the limited view occurs again! Boys and girls *are* taught together, in English-speaking communities, too, many times larger than the whole British Isles. That is the rule in America, in Australia, in Canada, and in other colonies. And in those schools where they are taught together, the girls are generally the more intelligent pupils and are better able to take care of themselves than where they are secluded from the world, or wrapped up in a sort of moral cotton wool. The boys do not seem to take any harm in this system where the supervision is adequate, and possibly their manners may be materially improved.

At any rate, there are no places in the world where more genuine respect is paid to women than in those countries where the sexes are taught together. All this

is really an argument in favour of the franchise. As to juries of women, there are special instances where juries of matrons are impannelled, so that once more Mr. Labouchere has delivered an argument into our hands! There are questions affecting women in which women are naturally more competent than men, and it is precisely in regard to matters of this kind that women should have a voice in the making of the laws.

He admitted that many working women did not receive fair treatment in the matter of wages, but "to give them votes would not raise their wages by one shilling." Let us turn to the *Times* of the 9th March 1907, where we find, devoted to the question, a leading article which concludes with this noble trumpet-call: "Are we to give the franchise with the express object of raising the wages of those women by whom men's labour has been previously cheapened? And are we, in such a case, going to face the final possibility of a complete cleavage of economic interest between men and women?"

We see Mr. Labouchere uses one argument for his purpose, and the *Times* assumes the direct contrary, to uphold its own position. Here, too, the opponents of women's suffrage strive to destroy each other; but what Mr. Labouchere puts forward in his gay irresponsible way, the *Times* controverts with all its solemn pretentiousness and pompous self-complacency, by uttering an appeal to the meanest feelings of the mob. Women, according to the *Times*, should not obtain the vote because, if they did so, they would receive fair wages, and masculine competitors would suffer. There is no doubt that women would receive fair wages; but the second part of the proposition does not follow. The whole status of the worker would be raised by the concession of rights to women; and men, who are not, after all, the rivals of women but their partners, supporters, and devotees, would benefit also. Mr. Labouchere continues thus: "Women might be useful members upon subordinate local boards, for they have capacity for administrative work, and that



work affects both sexes, but could not his honourable friend appreciate the vast difference between a Board of Guardians or a School Board and the great Imperial Parliament?"

Well, Mr. Labouchere's concession with regard to the capacity of women may be accepted as justified, but the question is not one of comparing the great Imperial Parliament with a Board of Guardians. What we have to consider is this, whether a woman who has capacity enough to be a good administrator on a public body is not equally as intelligent in estimating the characters of two candidates for Parliament as her own employees, or even as the village "boss" who airs his views in the local *pub*.

However, let us drink more from this immortal fount of wisdom. Mr. Labouchere continues: To give the franchise to women would destroy the best relations between the sexes. What are the best relations between the sexes? Would Mr. Labouchere like us to go back to the conditions that prevail in Mohammedan countries? "Men may have rounded Seraglio Point, but they have not yet doubled Cape Turk." Mr. Labouchere would not have us round Cape Turk, lest we should destroy the best relations between the sexes.

It was not Mr. Labouchere, however, who talked out the Bill. That honour was reserved for Mr. T. H. Robertson, of South Hackney. Who Mr. Robertson was I do not know. I have read many books dealing with questions of science, of literature, of art, of social progress, and of the illumination of thought, but in none of these have I discovered the name of Mr. T. H. Robertson. He seems to be known only for this memorable speech, which was distinguished for nothing beyond the fact that it continued till 25 minutes to 6 a.m. on 12th May 1905. Mr. T. H. Robertson does not appear to be still in the House. His epoch-making exploit did not recommend him to the electors of South Hackney. Perhaps they thought this great contribution was not sufficient to



compensate for his other deficiencies. Mr. Labouchere was incoherent, but amusing; Mr. T. H. Robertson was simply dull. Mr. T. H. Robertson said that for once he was in full agreement with the member for Northampton, and, continuing his remarks, he declared, according to the *Times* report, that "something like a revolution would follow."

Now, do statements like these seriously express the thoughts of a capable and well-balanced mind? Did any one of that grave assembly for a moment suppose that a revolution would follow? The revolution would be produced by women who, according to these authorities, did not even desire a vote. If we look at the experience of countries where the franchise has been in operation for some time we find, in point of fact, that there is very little change in the public life. Some, indeed, who criticise women have made this a ground of complaint against them; others may say, "Why then give them the vote?" Now, we have never argued that women should have the vote in order to produce any wide, sweeping changes; we have never expected such; but we say it is necessary that they should have the vote in order that they may put their hand on those questions of legislation which have a special relation to women; to bring about complete equity in the laws; to obtain for women their rightful place, instead of cheating them and bolstering them up by insincere phrases: all this does not mean a revolution. Mr. T. H. Robertson's concluding remarks, which were curious after his revolutionary pronouncement, were, that women did not care for the vote, and that public interest in the question, slight as it had always been, had declined since the days of John Stuart Mill. If these arguments were worth anything at all, how would Mr. T. H. Robertson, supposing him to be still a factor in public life, face the enormous and powerful agitation which is now stirring the country?

On 25th April 1906 Mr. Keir Hardie moved his Bill for the Enfranchisement of Women. One of the opponents

on this occasion was Mr. Cremer, of Haggerston. He was afraid that Women's Suffrage might lead to Adult Suffrage. It is not necessary for us to enter upon the question of the goodness or badness of Adult Suffrage, for the Bill for Adult Suffrage has been put before the House. Let each question be argued on its own merits. If Women's Suffrage be good, let us have it, and deal in perfect freedom with Adult Suffrage when it comes up for discussion. The opponents of Women's Suffrage talk as if all the legislative wisdom were concentrated in themselves, and as though their successors would be bound to do something foolish. Mr. Cremer also "had too great a respect for women to drag them into the political arena, or to ask them to undertake obligations and discharge duties which they did not understand, and, what was more, which they did not care for."

It would hardly be believed that Mr. Cremer had previously expressed a fear about "handing the government of the country over to a majority of the electorate, who would not be men, but women"! Note the absolute illogicality of talk of this kind. To give Mrs. Jones a vote which she desires to have, and which she can intelligently employ, need not in the least upset the equilibrium of Mrs. Smith, who desires to stay at home and rule the world by rocking the cradle of the little Smith. Even the "Anti-Suffragist" ladies were not *dragged* into the political arena. It was of their own freewill that they proclaimed their own retiring dispositions from the house-tops, and that with such *fracas* they strove to prevent their sisters from appearing in a public light. Mr. Cremer further said: "The logical conclusion of this motion would be that women would have the right to sit in the House"; but, he contended, women were unsuited by their physical nature for the exercise of political duties. He did not hold that women would necessarily introduce a more humane element into their legislation, and instanced, in support of this view, their reluctance to dispense with the wearing of the feathers of rare

and beautiful birds which were destroyed for their adornment.

This argument is not precisely apropos, for the men who supply these feathers are not, on that account, deprived of their vote, and moreover it is rather the women of the old régime who have been the most addicted to this savage form of decoration, whereas nearly all those women who are most strenuous opponents of the wicked vanity of wearing these cruel trophies are also champions of the women's forward movement, including, naturally, the right of the suffrage.

Not one of us has ever put forward the argument that all women are perfect! The suffrage will really be a means of broadening their whole outlook, and of giving them an education beyond the mere formal and narrow education of the schools. And those women who have been educated to the highest degree, up to the present time, are certainly not amongst those who could be classed as wanting in humane feelings. Mr. W. Redmond spoke in favour of women on this occasion, saying in his *prime-sautier* fashion that "those who were denied the right of exercising influence in the government of the country in which they lived were slaves." More power to Mr. Redmond!

Mr. Bottomley declared himself in favour of the Bill, and at the same time said that he should resist any proposal to allow women to sit in that House. That, at least, is a perfectly discriminating point to make, and it takes the wind out of Mr. Cremer's sails with regard to his prophetic fears.

Mr. Walter Long's chief point was that "the women themselves were opposed to this proposal." This argument may now be left without comment. He continued to say that women did not want to enter the House, and we may leave him with that idea also, to cheer and reassure Mr. Cremer. Mr. Long was soon followed by Mr. Evans, with whose memorable utterances we dealt elsewhere. A great disturbance in the Ladies' Gallery ensued, which



greatly shocked the members at the time, and which caused them to wag their heads together and declare that the cause had been "set back for a century," forgetful of all the generations which had seen the cause pass by while contentedly listening to humorists like Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Sam Evans, content even to be bored by such speeches as those of Mr. T. H. Robertson and Mr. Cremer!

The last Bill which we have seen tabled on the subject was that of Mr. Dickinson, on 8th March 1907. Previous to the introduction of this Bill, Mr. Evans presented a petition signed by 21,000 women, protesting against the granting of the Parliamentary franchise to women. Mr. W. Redmond called out, amidst laughter and cheers: "You can always get people to hug their own chains"; but even this explanation did not satisfy The Women's Franchise Declaration Committee, who requested one of the members of Parliament, Mr. J. M. Robertson, to examine the signatures. His opinion, as duly recorded, was that a vast number of the signatures showed a remarkable similarity of penmanship!

The chief opponent was Mr. Whitehead, M.P. for Essex, S.E., who began with the usual stock argument, that "the franchise had never, or had hardly ever, been adopted in any European country." We have become accustomed to this senseless sort of reasoning. If men had always argued in this style we should never have had railways, we should never have had a Parliament, *we should never have had a nation at all!* Another of Mr. Whitehead's objections was that, of those women who had the franchise for the local government, few were willing to exercise it by going to the poll. This simply nullifies a number of other objections about the sweeping effects of the measure. It is very proper that those women who take an active interest in local government should have a vote. The abstention of those who take no interest in the matter does no harm to anyone. Mr. Whitehead, with the usual illogicality of some members of Parliament, next proceeded to point out the organic



change in our government which would follow by introducing two million new voters. Mr. Whitehead next feared the undue power of the party of wealth. It is sufficient to say that the usual argument is that, with the franchise, too much power would be given to the working classes. Mr. Whitehead concluded with a fine peroration, in praise of the spiritual and moral influence and the high ideals of women, but these benefits he seemed especially anxious to keep away from the sphere of the nation's business. Some of us might retain the belief that good spiritual influences and high ideals ought to find a place even in Parliament!

Mr. Bertram, M.P. for Herts, began by asserting that women, as a rule, did not desire the vote; he continued by holding up a terrible picture of the policy of the country's being wrecked "by a majority of voters who were not masculine." Here is a sidelight of the Parliamentary mind: "There are many unlovely things about men, and perhaps the most unlovely thing about them was their politics. One of its curious features was that honesty of purpose and absolute sincerity were impossible. (Laughter and cheers.)"

Some of the other opponents have declared that the Australian lady-voters did not "stick at a thumping big lie."

Mr. Whitehead says that since the women have had the vote in Colorado there has been a good deal of corruption. It has been abundantly proved that the departments of state in Colorado, in which women have been most conspicuous, are those which are most free from corruption. But if Mr. Bertram's argument should be taken at all seriously, Mr. Whitehead's would really neutralise it, by proving that women possessed sufficient lack of public honesty to qualify them for a seat in the House.

As I read the newspapers, some of these objectors remind me of a drunken loafer, who lay in the gutter outside a public-house, "in order," as he kept shouting, "to show that only a set of ragamuffins frequented it!"

Sir Francis Powell, M.P., followed, with the usual helpless argument: "No European country had adopted the principle of women's suffrage." In face of reasoning of this kind one is tempted to wish, like Charles Lamb, to feel his "bumps." Could not the argument have been employed with regard to every reform that was ever for the first time introduced for the well-being of the nation? Could we, for instance, have objected to the holding of a Colonial Conference, on the ground that no European State, large or small, had shown a precedent? Sir Francis Powell again opined: "That in a moment of excitement they (women) would, as a whole, vote in the same direction, and exercise practically the supreme powers of the state." But Miss Ermine Taylor says that women are influenced by Protestant clergymen and doctors, and Mr. Whitehead assured us they were peculiarly susceptible to the influence of Catholic priests. If we were to take Sir Francis Powell seriously, we should have to believe that doctors did not differ, and that all Catholic priests and Protestant ministers formed but one band of loving brothers, marching shoulder to shoulder along the same political road.

Mr. Massey, M.P. for Wilts, supplied the House with a new argument: "Was a woman to be First Lord of the Admiralty, and to send orders to the Channel Squadron, which she was incapable of commanding?"

No suffragist has ever put forward any such untenable proposals. One is rather amazed to hear a member of Parliament talking as if it were an unheard of and outrageous thing to make anyone the First Lord of the Admiralty who was incapable of commanding the Channel Squadron. Is Lord Tweedmouth capable of commanding the Channel Squadron? And was not the Sir Joseph Porter of *Pinafore* fame a skit on the Cabinet-making as it was then, and is now? Does Mr. Massey even imagine that he will ever see Mr. Haldane reining-in his fiery steed on the battlefield, or crying: "Up guards, and at 'em"?

Mr. Rees, of Montgomery, had the satisfaction of

bringing down the House, so frequently was his eloquence punctuated with laughter. A critical observer noted that the laughter was not with Mr. Rees, but at him! He, however, talked the Bill out.—On such small things as this the destiny of a nation depends! So ends the question in the House of Commons—FOR THE PRESENT!

I have devoted a good deal of space to the arguments of the members, not that they have seemed to possess any profundity, consistency, judgment, or wit, but because the public are apt to attach considerable importance to any pronouncement within the sacred precincts of the House. To refute their objections, it has always been sufficient to play off one opponent's statements against another, or, at times, to bring into juxtaposition the different statements of the same man. Some of them seem to have picked up any argument that they thought would serve the turn of the moment for their forensic displays, and so we have had a series of pictures presented which are both absurd and contradictory. The apathy of women on the one hand, a dangerous revolution of the millions of women at the poll on the other; the fact of women's being influenced by priests, clergymen, solicitors, and doctors,<sup>1</sup> and again, the danger of their

<sup>1</sup> It is undeniable that men are as liable to be influenced by women as women are by men. We need only cite a few familiar examples at random, such as the following: Adam by Eve; Samson by Delilah; David by Bathsheba; Solomon by his wives and other ladies; Catullus by many; Nero by Poppæa; Alexander the Great by Bagoas; Herod by Salome; Peter the Great by Catherine of Russia; Mahomet by Cadiga; Abelard by Héloïse; Nelson by Lady Hamilton; Luther by Catherine Böra; Henry VIII. by Anne Boleyn and others; Talleyrand by Madame de Staël and others; Louis xv. by Madame de Pompadour; George iv. by Mrs. Fitzherbert and others; C. S. Parnell by Mrs. O'Shea, and instances might be indefinitely multiplied. Of women who have exercised extraordinary influence, sometimes beneficially, over men, we need only mention at haphazard such fascinating examples as the following: Cleopatra; Isabella the Catholic; Marie Antoinette; Ellen Terry; Catherine de Medici; St. Teresa; Julia Farnese Orsini; Johanna Southcott; Mother Mary Baker Eddy; Mrs. Girling; Annie Besant; La Belle Otero; Sarah Bernhardt; St. Catherine of Sienna; Adelina Patti; George Eliot; Elizabeth Fry; Lucrezia Borgia; and, of course, Marie Corelli. The political influence of the last-named is already so generally recognised that it would be an



refusing all advice; the incompetence and corruption of women on the one hand, and on the other their superior brightness, which would be dimmed in a degenerate Parliament. What conclusion arises from all this? Is it not simply that, in the reality, as well as in this oratorical presentment, adverse forces would mutually control each other? Not a great deal would be changed, but, on the whole, there would be increased interest and animation in our public life, and many wrongs and disadvantages under which women admittedly suffer would at least *have a chance* of redress.

I add here some general considerations, chiefly physiological.

One of the arguments which has most weight, brought forward by the opponents of Women's Suffrage, is that of women's inferior physique. The average man looks upon a woman as unfitted, by her physical conformation, for the activity of life required in the understanding of public affairs. He regards her mind as being in correspondence with her physical deficiencies. He may put forward one argument after another, but when these arguments are beaten down he remains of the same opinion still, showing that his real objection does not lie in the direction of a reasoned belief, but rather on those obscure but potent influences which may be described as tradition, habit of mind, or prejudice.

If he has read and thought a little he will tell you that woman's brain is smaller than man's, on the average, and

act of supererogation on her part to condescend to record a vote had less favoured women in general the franchise. On the other hand, the possession of the vote would tend to deprive her of the formidable political influence she now exercises. My contention therefore is, that the question of sex should have nothing to do with the question of right. If women are liable to be influenced by clerical, legal, and medical men, men are equally exposed to the influence of women, whether those women happen to be wise—or otherwise. The arguments which are applied to women apply with greater force when turned against men, some of whom have injured or wrecked a nation, or imperilled the existence of a world-wide religion, by some misplaced affection or amour, or other indiscretion, in which woman has demonstrated the superior force of her will.



that therefore nature has settled, once and for all, that woman cannot stand on the same plane as man in intellectual or public affairs. A French anthropologist who worked laboriously at this subject, Quételet, determined, from a great number of observations that a woman's brain is less than a man's in the proportion of 13 to 14. So far the position might be thought to be carried against us. Such an argument is, in a general way, entitled to real value, but the same scientific observer established also, that the bodily weight of woman was to that of man in the proportion of 42 to 47; and from the figures he worked out it will be found that, in proportion to the total bodily weight, or roughly in proportion to size, the brain of woman is a shade larger than that of man! And, after all, when one considers how the brain is formed, by the immense plexus of nerve fibres, cells, nuclei, and nerve co-ordinating tracts, it will be seen that the important matter is not absolute size of brain, but relative size of brain in proportion to the whole physique: in other words, the number and intricacy of the nerve paths and their connecting stations, which go to form the thinking instrument of the individual.

In the *British Medical Journal*, of 27th January 1906, Mr. Karl Pearson summed up the controversy on this subject, which was begun in *Biometrika* by Dr. Raymond Pearl, Dr. Gladstone, and Mr. Blakeman. Mr. Karl Pearson rightly refers the differences of brain-weight to differences of total bodily weight: "The man of slender build is a woman in brain-weight, and the woman of robust build a man in brain-weight. The difference in weight between men's and women's brains is thus seen to be precisely the difference between brain-weight in two groups of men. It is only a sexual difference in so far as difference in external physique is a sexual difference."

Then again: "Those anatomists who assert that man is more intelligent than woman, because he has greater brain-weight, must be prepared to hold, on precisely the same weight of evidence, that the big man is more

intelligent than the small man." He concludes thus: "I do not think any such classification of ability, by size, is worth a moment's consideration, but it is precisely on a par with the customary statements that are made with regard to the effect on intelligence of the relative brain-weights of men and women. What difference there may be in men's and women's brains, regarded as *intelligence mechanisms*, will require a far more subtle mode of investigation than the scales and balance for its determination."

It is just as well to have dealt with this matter once and for all, for nothing terrifies the average man so much as a touch of science which he does not understand. And nothing gives a shallow-minded individual so much importance as when he quotes a little false biology.

Another argument, proceeding from the same order of ideas, is that regarding the petty ways, the narrow lives, and the lack of capacity for taking general views which are said to be characteristic of women. It is asked, for instance, what have women ever done in politics, in war, or in invention? Suppose we were to give the question a grotesque turn for a moment by inquiring: "How is it that no tailor has distinguished himself in architecture or research, or what cook has ever made a name as a great surgeon?" The answer would be obvious. Whatever talents these men might have, they are precluded by their very occupations from distinguishing themselves in the fields in which great energy of mind and body is demanded. A man who has his time absolutely absorbed in one routine is thereby cut off from shining in any sphere demanding other conditions.

So it has been, generally speaking, with women.

In the past they have been debarred from an equal education with their brothers. Man has forced woman into a narrow domestic life, in which her energies are used up, often in thankless tasks. He has actively discouraged any attempt on her part to assert her individuality, "to do things," or in any way to appear above

the level of simpering conformity to those notions of his which he has declared to mark "the natural condition of woman." What right has he, after this, to turn round and upbraid woman for her want of enterprise, her want of initiative, or her limited views? He might just as well turn upon an unsuccessful candidate for Parliament, and accuse him of having done nothing in the House to forward good legislation.

It is because women feel that the tendency of the present system is to cramp their intellects and belittle their powers that they have, at length, revolted against these artificial restrictions. The demand for the vote is, after all, only part of a general movement amongst women for emancipation from a kind of domestic thralldom which is neither good for them nor for the community at large. The arguments advanced by our opponents, when they endeavour to debate rationally, are thus seen to furnish the best weapons for our side of the fight. And in this, too, we recognise the value of putting forward great exemplars among women in various fields of human activity. If we point to Miss Kellerman, for example, whose swimming feats are extraordinary, even without reference to sex, the answer is: "Oh, but she is only one woman out of millions." That is true, but Miss Kellerman is not a monster; she is a perfectly formed young lady, only somewhat better developed all round than many of her sisters. But the appearance of Miss Kellerman once and for all smashes the argument that there is anything in the natural constitution of woman which prevents her from possessing physical energy superior to that of the average man as we now know him. Similarly, women of marvellous intellectual capacity, such as Sonia Kovalevsky, Madam Curie, or Mrs. Ayrton, are not freaks, or unaccountable phenomena. They represent the highest level, at present, to which the intellect of woman has attained when placed under the same conditions of study, and afforded the same encouragement in the pursuit of science, as in the case of man.

Who formed the standard of what women should do and could do? The Turks thought she should do nothing all day but loll in a harem, waiting for the handkerchief of the master to be thrown to her. Yet the average Englishman does not believe that that was the full conception of a woman's duty, and he finds that woman herself has improved by virtue of the opportunities he has conceded to her. No one would care to observe in his own wife, or sister, or daughter the dense ignorance and superstition of the Eastern woman. Why, then, has he placed a limit? By what process of reasoning did he arrive at the conclusion that his own little formulæ and domestic arrangements had evolved the highest type which is possible in his own race? Does not the very asking of the question indicate the absurdity of setting artificial restrictions on the development, physical, mental, and moral, of the modern woman?



## CHAPTER XII

### WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE ACCORDING TO THE PRESENT ELECTORAL SYSTEM

IF we take the present basis upon which depends the right to be a parliamentary elector and to have one's name on the register, and then consider whether, on this basis, women are capable of possessing the necessary qualifications, we shall find that there are numbers of women who not only possess these qualifications, but who can actually confer upon men the right to a place on the register! Manhood alone does not yet confer a right to exercise the franchise.

The conditions as set forth by those in authority are—

- (a) *The Household Franchise*:—The inhabitant occupier, as owner or tenant, for twelve months, prior to July 15, of a house or part of a house occupied as a separate dwelling, who has paid his rates, and not received parochial relief.
- (b) *Occupation Franchise*:—The occupier for the same period of any land or tenement, of the annual value of ten pounds, who has paid his rates, and not received parochial relief, and, in the case of English and Scotch boroughs, has resided for six months in, or within seven miles of, the borough, or within twenty-five miles in the case of the City of London.
- (c) *Lodger Franchise*:—The occupier as a lodger for the same period, of part of a dwelling-house,

of the clear yearly value of ten pounds unfurnished.

- (d) *Service Franchise*:—The inhabitant for the same period of a dwelling-house by virtue of any office, service, or employment, if the house is not also occupied by the employer.

These four qualifications apply to counties and boroughs alike, and to the whole of the United Kingdom. Other qualifications which depend upon property, vary in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and with one exception do not apply to boroughs. These qualifications are:

(e) Owners of a freehold estate of inheritance of the annual value of forty shillings;

(f) Owners of an estate of any tenure for life or lives of the annual value of five pounds;

(g) Owners of a freehold estate for life or lives exceeding forty shillings, but less than five pounds in annual value, if they are in occupation, and were seised of such estate before the Reform Act of 1832, or have acquired it since that date by marriage, marriage settlement, devise, or promotion to a benefice or office;

(h) Owners of leaseholds created for a term of sixty years of the annual value of five pounds, or twenty years of the annual value of fifty pounds. When the property giving an ownership qualification is in a parliamentary borough, and the owner is not in occupation, he votes for the county or division in which the borough lies.

With some unimportant differences with regard to Scotland and Ireland, these are the qualifications which constitute the right to vote. Is there anything unwomanly in fulfilling any of these conditions, anything degrading to womanly dignity? There are women qualified under each of these heads, who suffer the penalties attached to such holdings in the way of rates and taxes, direct or indirect; it is only the penalties, not the privileges, which attach to property or independence which women are allowed to share, yet, considering the

low rate of women's wages, these taxes must press much more heavily on them than on men.

At every election, and from every party, we hear *ad nauseam* the well-worn cry, "No taxation without representation." We are told that this is the basis of our democratic government. Yet, how utterly hypocritical, in reality, is this cry! No party has yet had the honesty to correct this statement by altering it to "No taxation without representation *for men*; let women be taxed, but not represented." Not only are women qualified to have their names placed on the register equally with men, under the existing conditions, but we find under head (*g*) that those men who have acquired, since 1832, a freehold estate for life or lives exceeding forty shillings but less than five pounds in annual value, *by marriage* or *by marriage settlement*, are entitled to vote. In this way, by the act of marriage or settlement, a man gains the right to a place on the register through his wife, and, so far, I have never heard that any man has objected to such qualification on the part of his wife, or that he has refused to avail himself of the benefits accruing to himself thereby.

Equality of taxation is an admitted right of women, although one might think *it* would interfere with cradle-rocking! It is only the right of equality of representation that horrifies and scandalises our legislators. We are willing to share our necessary evils, but not our privileges. It is human nature, not at its best and highest; but it isn't JUSTICE.

The present electoral qualifications, with the exception of the electors of the university members, are based, not on physical, mental, or moral grounds, but on property and length of residence. The only male exceptions are certified lunatics and criminals undergoing sentence. Any man of weak intellect who is not certified as a lunatic, and who is possessed of any of these qualifications, is entitled to vote, and there are not a few such among the electors. And even among those elected

there have been men who, through the courtesy of the House of Commons, have wasted hours of the public time in the meaningless and irresponsible chatter prompted by a diseased brain.

Any male criminal, so long as he is undetected, or after he has served his sentence, is also allowed to register his vote, and this class is also not unknown among the elected.

The exception to this property basis of election are the elections of university members; and here, too, women possess the necessary qualifications, as in the case of the women graduates of Scottish Universities. They undergo exactly the same course as the men graduates; nothing is made easier on the score of their womanhood; they are allowed to share all the labour and hard work; and again, it is only the privilege that is denied to them.

From a logical point of view it should follow that if a woman, because she is a woman, is unfit to vote, she is unfit to be qualified to vote; that she is therefore unfit to hold property, "even to the value of ten pounds a year unfurnished," and also unfit to graduate in the Scottish Universities.

From the moral point we have evidence in the case of New Zealand and Australia, of the beneficial effects of women's exercise of the franchise. It is generally granted that women are possessed of a higher moral sense than men, and this higher moral tone has had an excellent effect on the political atmosphere of those countries.

In an account of the effect of the women's vote in those American States where they have been enfranchised, it is stated that those women whose profession is immorality do not go to the poll, the reasons given being that women of this unfortunate class change their residence too often to entitle them to a vote, and also, that they are anxious to keep themselves as far as possible from the ken of those in authority. The same writer goes on to state that the women most anxious to vote



are the intellectual, well-educated, thinking women, and those of sound common sense and practical experience, represented by the successful women of the working classes. In the case of these States, as in Australia, the cause of temperance and of social reform has very considerably advanced since women were enfranchised. Quite lately our youngest European kingdom, Norway, has begun her new career bravely, and has gallantly pointed the way to our more halting and uncertain selves. With a truly democratic and a liberal spirit she has enlarged the franchise of her people by the admission to that privilege of various classes of women possessing special qualifications. Finland, too, has shown a liberal and most unusual spirit, unlike France, whose women led the Revolution equally with the men; she did not turn upon and enslave them when that liberty was gained; she has recognised that women took their part in her struggle for political freedom, and has granted them their share in it. Finland has granted even more than our English Suffragists have demanded, she has given her women the right to be elected as well as to elect.

While the present basis of qualification for the franchise exists, and women are found to be qualified under each section, all the discussion and head-shaking over her fitness or unfitness to vote is beside the mark. A man is judged by the above-quoted conditions, and not at all by his fitness or unfitness. Why should more be demanded in the case of women?

## CHAPTER XIII

### METHODS OF WORK—AGITATION, ORGANISATION, AND SPREADING THE LIGHT

I BELIEVE the foregoing arguments will convince any fair-minded man of the justice of woman's claim for the franchise. But it is obvious to anyone who has studied our history, and taken interest in contemporary events, that to show the justice of a demand is not even half of the battle. In order to create an impression in Parliament that demand must be exhibited in the concrete form of organisation and "movement." Parliament is so constituted that questions of abstract right have but little influence upon it; in Parliament they weigh influences, even in the most literal sense. A movement which has right on its side needs a strong backing of members. A compact party in the House is always listened to; if the backing be strong enough, or the party preponderating, it matters little whether the programme of that party be founded on equity or not. One commonly hears in the House such phrases as: "A question being ripe for settlement"; a reform being "within the limits of practical politics"; "the balance of influences." And he is looked upon as a tyro in parliamentary work, and as a naïve person generally, who fails to recognise the force of these little formulæ, or who argues on the general grounds of right or wrong. I do not mean to say that the rightness or wrongness of a question is without effect on Parliament; but it tells indirectly, namely, by first influencing public opinion, and thus determining the extent of its importance by the election of members. Now all these matters must

be considered with regard to methods of agitation, questions of organisation, and the bringing to bear upon the House the force of a considerable body of public opinion.

The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies is the oldest of the representative bodies which have been established to further the demand for the franchise. The permanence of this institution indicates at once the serious character of the work it has undertaken. That work, magnificent as it is, on the educational side, has not been entirely effective; and the necessity has been perceived, by more ardent spirits, of propaganda by other methods.

Prominent among the workers in the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies are women not only of high ability, but of great social influence, such as Lady Frances Balfour and Mrs. Fawcett. These ladies have not only been distinguished as earnest workers in the cause, but they have also added the saving grace of wit to their self-sacrificing efforts. Their work has been greatly aided by the devotion and energy of such able secretaries as Miss Palliser, Miss Frances Stirling, and Miss Hardcastle; and among those who are conspicuous in the Midlands, from which a good deal of the strength of the movement is derived, may be mentioned Miss Gore-Booth and Miss Roper. Another useful movement has recently been set going by Miss Clementina Black and Miss Aphra Wilson, for collecting signatures to a simple Declaration in favour of the Franchise, which will dispose, in unmistakable fashion, of all arguments based upon the lack of interest taken by women in the subject. Miss Black's work has recently been aided by the zealous endeavours of Miss Mitford.

A Men's League for Women's Suffrage has also been founded, the representatives being Messrs. T. Mortimer Budgett and Goldfinch Bate.

The Women's Social and Political Union is more in the public eye of late, and consequently more subjected to hostile criticism. That is indirectly a tribute to their

effectiveness. Remember the old saying of Dr. Johnson, that he never thought an article of his had got home unless it produced a vehement response. The response to the activity of the Women's Social and Political Union certainly has been vehement—in many cases positively outrageous! It has brought the question within the "purview of practical politics." When the leaders went to prison, one might have quoted from Tennyson's "In Memoriam," lines not inept:

"My sudden frost was sudden gain,  
And gave all ripeness to the grain,  
It might have drawn from after-heat."

Their doings are too familiar to the public to require any notice in detail. Every one in England has his own opinion, good or bad, of Miss Annie Kenney and Miss Christobel Pankhurst. Of course one finds the usual kind of disparagements: "These women are unsexing themselves"; "They are courting notoriety," etc. But, after all, is there not usually a higher motive than these in the great endeavours of any public man, or leading woman, even though, occasionally, their course may not be free from error?

Let us look at Mrs. Despard for a moment. Here is a woman, a gentlewoman in every true sense of the word, highly educated, accustomed to good society, wielding a considerable amount of personal influence, and also, it may be said with due respect, having passed the age at which a woman is moved by petty vanities or any mere desire of publicity; yet she throws herself devotedly into this cause, incurring the disapproval of some of her own household: she takes part in any exciting political display; runs the risk of rough usage at the hands of the police, and is finally haled off to prison like any common malefactor. During all these trials she preserves her fortitude of mind and serenity of disposition; she does not even recriminate upon her enemies, but returns cheerfully to take her part again in assisting the cause which she has so



much at heart. Can anyone, looking impartially on such acts as these, believe they are impelled by any unworthy motives? Do we not rather find here a type such as we have learned to admire throughout the whole course of history, in the example of high devotion, self-abnegation, fervid enthusiasm, and loyalty to a great ideal? Can an ideal which inspires a woman of that character be merely false and hollow?

Consider, again, the manifestations of Miss Christobel Pankhurst. Here is a young lady, remarkably gifted by nature both in mind and in body, scholarly, but without a touch of pedantry; enthusiastic, yet a practical organiser, and endowed with a clear and steady judgment. She steps down into the ranks of her fellow-workers, claiming comradeship, without ostentation, among the factory girls. She addresses monster communities in Hyde Park, yet without losing a particle of her ladylike womanliness. It is a truly delightful picture, which I shall treasure in the gallery of my recollections: this young woman (a lady evidently, as expressed by her dress, her manner, and the indefinable air of one who is well-bred) standing on a rough platform in Hyde Park, her body swaying with graceful movements, her voice well modulated, her gestures appropriate and easy, and her discourse logical in its reasoning, and brightened by sallies of genuine wit. And Miss Kenney, perhaps the most noteworthy of all. When a cause reaches a certain level of interest, a certain degree of intensity, there always seems to arise—and there must be something deeper than mere chance in all this—some one person as its natural leader by a gift of peculiar genius, who indeed seems to have been born for the work. The women's movement has found such a champion in Miss Annie Kenney. Starting without any advantages of influence, position, means, or education, she has, by the fire of her devotion, her resistless spiritual qualities, and her Irish pluck, galvanised the movement, and given it life, breath, and a living soul.

No, there is something more in all this than can be

derided, or sneered at, or flouted out of sight. Cynics never see the real truth of things; they have not seen it in this case.

The women have committed illegalities, certainly, but so did the monk of old who boldly sprang into the arena of the Coliseum and denounced the gladiatorial combats. The fury of the public produced his death, but his spiritual message told. It was so with the fiery Savonarola. His message rose Phoenix-like from his ashes.

The Americans who resisted the tea duty by flinging the cargo into Boston Bay, were guilty of illegality, but they then and there enkindled the spark which burst into the blaze of freedom for the United States. The reformers, in the early years of the last century, were guilty of far greater riot, of far more serious violations of the law, than these ladies. But again, history has justified them. So far the illegalities of the Women's Social and Political Union have been rather of the nature of technical offences. They seem grave mainly by virtue of the harsh punishments meted out to the offenders, which, however, have already turned public opinion in their favour. The answer to their demands, and even their importunate efforts, cannot be simply blind force,—the obduracy of mere prejudice or ignorance. We, too, as a nation have become educated by their propaganda. And the solution which is, at the same time, expedient and wise, is, as has so often before been proved, to follow the simple dictates of right and justice, and to give to women the opportunity of fashioning laws of which they, equally with us men, bear the consequences, and which should be conceived for the general good of the whole of the community. The suffrage must be won.

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